# Our Uncle William

David Skaats Foster

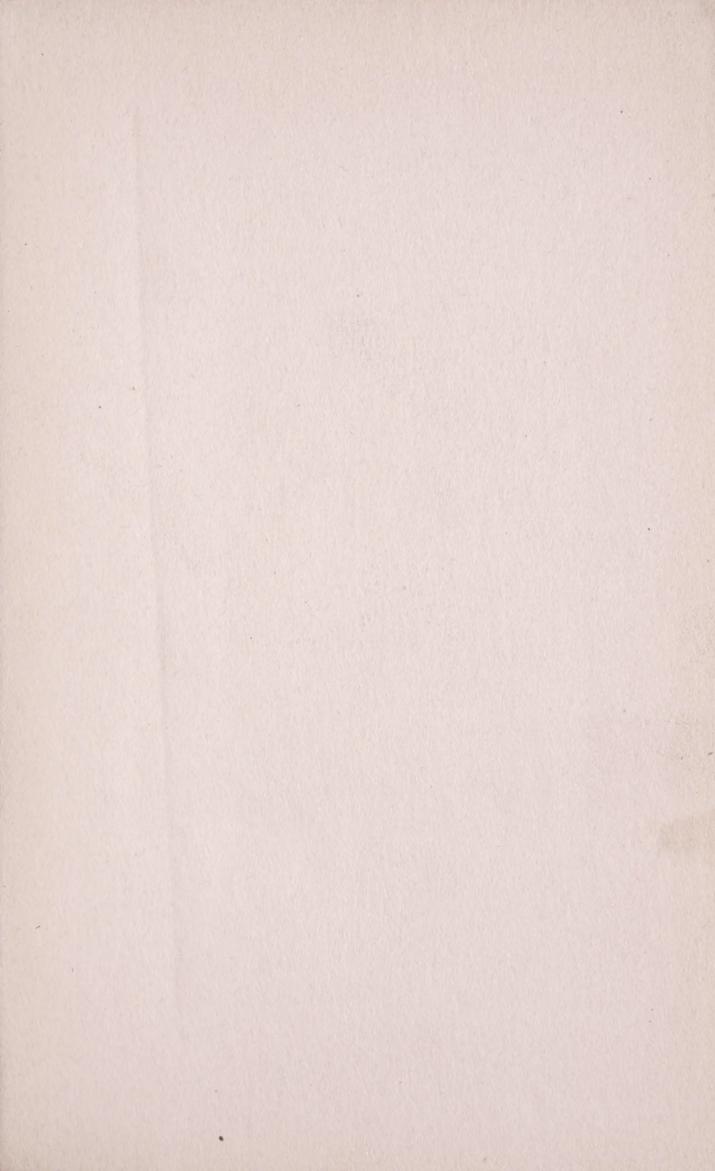


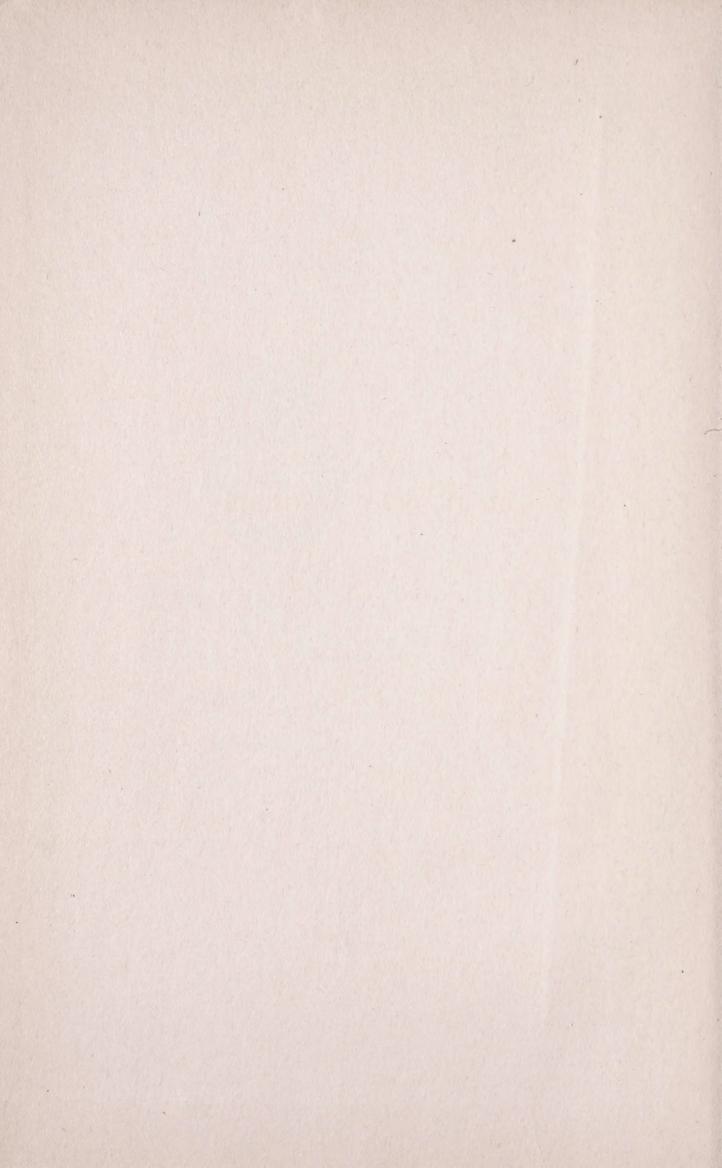


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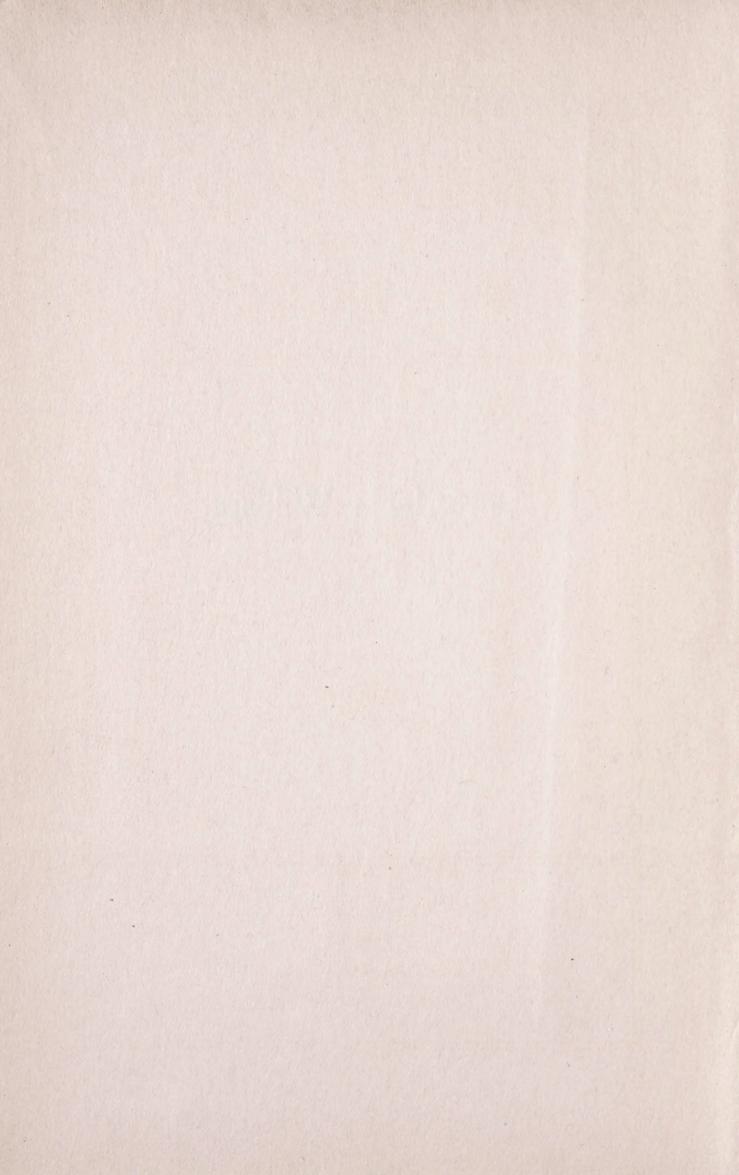
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## Our Uncle William



## OUR UNCLE WILLIAM

### NATE SAWYER

## DAVID SKAATS FOSTER

Author of "Flighty Arethusa," "The Road To London," "The Divided Medal," Etc.



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#### CHAPTER I

#### THE CARSON FAMILY

"It is very strange," said George Percival Carson, Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson's younger son, "that we have never heard of Uncle William before. I have never heard that father had a brother; in fact, I have always been taught to believe that he had neither brothers or sisters."

"That is what I always supposed," said his mother. "When I first met your dear father he was alone in the world. He certainly never told me that he had any relatives. Your dear father was singularly reticent in regard to his family. When I spoke of the matter, he invariably turned the conversation to something else. He didn't seem to want to talk about it."

"Perhaps," said George Percival, "the less he said about his family the better. Probably he couldn't say anything good about them; so he

kept silent."

"George, I am ashamed of you. Your remarks are certainly in very bad taste. I have no doubt that your dear father's ancestors were highly respectable people; though, perhaps, they did not move in the sphere which has always been occupied by my people. My grandfather Grosvenor was a distinguished lawyer, and my father was a judge of the probate court.

Never forget that, George. Never forget that you are a Grosvenor. The fact, however, that you are a Grosvenor on your mother's side, does not excuse you for making flippant and indelicate remarks about the family of your dear father."

"There is no harm, mother, in making flippant remarks about a family that never existed. As far as we know, father never had any ancestors or relatives whatever. That is what makes it so strange to have this Uncle William popping up like a jack-in-the-box. I wish you would read his letter over again. Perhaps there is

something in it which we missed."

There were four people in the room beside the mother and son. There was an older sister of Mrs. Carson, a widow, Mrs. Lydia Grosvenor Thorne; there was a younger sister, Mrs. Maria Grosvenor Rosenfeld. There was Mrs. Carson's daughter Amy, a girl of twenty; and there was the wife of Mrs. Carson's elder son, Thomas, whose maiden name had been Lily Smith. These six, together with Morris Rosenfeld, Master Max Rosenfeld, his son, Thomas Grosvenor Carson and his little daughter, Dot, or Dorothy Carson, lived in Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson's house.

The six people in Mrs. Carson's parlor now brought their chairs together, Mrs. Carson took the letter from her handbag, and, adjusting her eye glasses, read it aloud. Union Hotel, Denver, Col., May 16, 1913.

Mrs. Sarah Carson, 176 West 48th St., New York.

My dear sister-in-law Sarah.

I am your husband's brother, William. Perhaps he has never told you about me. That would be his way. I left him many, many years ago, when he was little more than a boy. Ever since then, however, I have kept him in mind, and I sorrowed upon hearing of his death. I have procured, also, at different times, news of you and your three children, Thomas, George and Amy. I know what they are like, and I know how it is with you and them. I have spent all these years in labor and turmoil. I have succeeded in what I set out to do, and my task here is ended. I am tired of the continuous strife for gold and station with which I am surrounded, and I am coming east, to spend my declining years among the old familiar scenes. You all are near and dear to me, and I would fain dwell with you, or near to you, that I may watch over the destinies of your children, and give them such advantages as lie in my power. I shall leave here in one week, and shall arrive in New York, at the Forty-second Street Station, at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. Do not trouble to meet me, as I can easily find my way to your house. With love for you and the children, I am.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM CARSON.

"What do you think of it all?" asked Mrs.

Carson when she had finished reading.

"I think, Mother," answered George, "that the whole thing has a very queer look. For twenty-five or thirty years the old beggar never gives a sign. Then all at once he bobs up and develops a great fondness for us. I do hope that the old chap is well heeled." "I wish, George, that you would not use such coarse expressions. Remember that you are speaking of your uncle, your dear father's brother. He is certainly entitled to our respect and our affection. I do not think that you need worry about his financial circumstances. Judging from what he says in his letter, I am sure that your Uncle William is well provided with worldly goods. I should not be surprised if he were a millionaire. Upon receiving his letter I at once wrote him that we would receive him with open arms, and that we would certainly expect him to make his home with us for the rest of his life."

"That's right, Mother," said George Percival. "I see that you have wisely resolved not to let a good thing get away when once you have it in hand. I wonder whether I could strike the old chap for a six-cylinder car."

"George, I really wish you would not say such heartless and detestable things. If your Uncle William is a rich man, there is no reason why we should not all benefit from it. I am sure that we have had a hard enough time of it up to the present. What would we all have done had we not made common capital of our small means and lived together under the same roof? Even as it is, we have sometimes been hard put to it to secure the bare necessaries of life. It has also been very hard to preserve such appearances in our style of living as our position has made imperative. It will be time enough

to talk of a motor car after a few of our absolutely crying needs are satisfied. The house is in a shameful condition. We must have an Oriental rug for the parlor and dining-room, and the building must be newly papered and painted throughout. These are only a few of the many betterments which I have thought of. Then there are some gowns and hats for Amy and myself, and some things for Lily."

"I am going to ask him for a Persian lamb sacque," announced Lily Smith Carson, "a real one, with a mink collar and mink muff. What

are you going to ask him for, Amy?"

"I am not going to ask him for anything," answered Amy. "Furthermore, I don't care whether he has any money or not. I would think just as much of him if he were as poor as Job's turkey. I have always felt the want of a real, live, kind old uncle, and I know that I

shall love him immensely."

"Amy," said her mother, reprovingly, "you are always so unpracticable. You talk as if you were the only one who is going to care anything for him, whereas, of course, we shall all think the world of your Uncle William. At the same time, though, I see no reason why we should neglect our opportunities. Your Uncle William is doubtless a man of large means. We are his only living relatives. To judge from the wording of his letter, he is a man of kindly and generous impulses. What could please him more than to supply us with those luxuries and

Pleasures which we have always been without. When I was a girl, I never knew what it was to count the cost of anything. Since my marriage to your dear father, my life has been nothing but one long struggle to maintain a home and to keep up appearances. Do you wonder that I look forward so joyfully to the prospect of an

amelioration of our circumstances?"

"I feel just as you do," remarked Lily Smith Carson. "When I married Thomas, I looked forward to a life of ease and happiness. I had no idea that I was letting myself in for this long, dreary, dull, sordid existence. I loved parties, dances, theatres, suppers and pretty clothes. It is so long since I have experienced anything of the kind that I have forgotten what they are like. No one will be more glad than I to welcome Uncle William."

"Lily," spoke her mother-in-law, severely, "I wonder that you can talk in that way. Consider for a moment what your condition was before you married Thomas, and what it is now. Your remarks are certainly the extreme of poor taste, and show a lack of discretion and ordinary sense. You must remember at least that you are now a member of an intelligent, respectable and

cultured family."

"I take it," said Lily, defiantly, "that you mean to infer that my family was neither intelligent, respectable, or cultured."

"You may take it in any way you wish." Lily Smith Carson arose from her chair.

She was a tall, shapely girl, with black hair and eyes, and a pink-and-ivory complexion. She looked at her mother-in-law for a moment with blazing eyes. Then she swept out of the apartment.

"What a vain, empty-headed spitfire our Lily is!" exclaimed George Percival. "Poor old Thomas let himself in for a lot of trouble when he married her. That is what comes of taking to wife a lady stenographer. I doubt if she makes a favorable impression on Uncle Bill."

"George," exclaimed his mother, sternly, "do not criticize your sister-in-law. She has her faults, heaven knows, but we must pass them over. Also, please remember this: you must

never again give your uncle that name."
"Sarah," now spoke up her sister Lydia, "if your brother-in-law is the rich man that you think him, it will make a great difference in your situation, and I was thinking that it would be no longer necessary for me to contribute so much to the common capital. Instead of seven hundred dollars, five hundred should be a plenty."

"Lydia," exclaimed Mrs. Carson, "what are you thinking of? When William is with us, it will be necessary to put the table and other parts of the housekeeping upon a better footing, there will be an extra expense, and, instead of reducing your contribution, you should rather increase it. However, I will not ask this. There is something besides which I wish to talk to you about. You and I have the two large rooms upon the second floor. I have the advantage of a front room; but your room is the sunnier and, I think, the better of the two. In fact, I think that your room is the best in the house. Of course, nothing will be too good for my brother William, and I have decided to install him in your room."

"And where am I to go?" demanded her

sister, with an outraged air.

"I was thinking of putting you in the room

next to yours, at the back of the hallway."

"And do you think, for a moment, that I am paying seven hundred dollars a year for the privilege of occupying a back hall bedroom? The idea is outrageous, and I refuse absolutely. Put that new brother-in-law of yours in that eight-by-ten bedroom if you want. It probably is plenty good enough for him. I doubt if he has any money anyway, and, mark my words, you will be sorry that you took him into the house at all."

"Lydia," answered Mrs. Carson, with gentle forbearance in her tone and manner, "I do not mind in the least what you say about Brother William. You are simply envious and jealous, and I pass it by. When we decided to club together and live in my house, it was agreed that I was to be mistress of the establishment, and that I was to arrange everything. I have decided that Brother William shall occupy your

room, and there is nothing further to be said about the matter."

"Very well," exclaimed Lydia Grosvenor Thorne, rising to her feet. "I shall pack my

trunks this very night."

She was a tall, angular woman. Her sparse gray hair was drawn smoothly back from her brow, and she had an acidulous cast of countenance. For a moment, she looked at her sister with a glance of scorn. Then she stalked from the room like a grenadier.

"Dear me," lamented Mrs. Carson, "Lydia grows more cattish and spiteful every day, and just see how obstinate and unreasonable she is."

"There's something I wanted to talk to you about, too," she continued, turning to her sister, Maria. "I will wish Brother William of course to have the post of honor at the table. He must sit at my right hand, and Morris will have to move. The table only accommodates ten, anyway, so Max will have to sit at a little side table, which I will place immediately behind you and Morris."

"But I won't consent to have Max eat at a side table," announced Mrs. Rosenfeld, indignantly. "The poor little boy will be lonely and will not eat. He has always sat by his mama, and it would be cruel to put him off by himself, all alone. Why don't you put Dot at a side table? Then Thomas and Lily could move one seat further down, and your brother-in-law could

sit at your left,"

"That would not do at all. Brother William must sit in the post of honor, which is at my right hand. With Max at a side table, you and Morris could move one seat further down, and that would make a place for William. Then, too, I wish that you and Morris would change places, so that you would sit next to William, instead of Morris."

"Ah! I think I see what is troubling you. You imagine that this precious brother-in-law of yours might object to sitting next my husband,

because my husband is a Jew."

"To be candid with you, Maria, that is exactly what I thought. Some people, you know, have scruples upon that subject. Now calm yourself, Maria, and don't get so angry. Morris, I admit, is an exceptional member of his race, and his table manners, for the last year, at any

rate, have been irreproachable."

"Sarah Carson!" cried her sister. "You are insulting. You are detestable. If this miraculously discovered brother-in-law of yours is half as much of a man as my Morris, which I doubt, you will have reason to be proud of him. I am going to my room, and I shall not come down to dinner. You may send me up a cup of tea, and tell Morris, as soon as he comes in, that I wish to see him. I want to find out whether he is content to pay fifteen hundred dollars a year, and to submit to such insults as you have just put upon us."

Saying this, Mrs. Rosenfeld, a short, buxom

and rather comely woman of forty, put her handkerchief to her eyes and bustled from the room.

"Well, of all the disagreeable and cantankerous people in the world," exclaimed Mrs. Carson, "my two sisters are the most disagreeable and the most cantankerous. I wonder what your Uncle William will think of them. I am sure that they will prejudice him against us. Amy, where is George? I didn't see him go out."

"Perhaps he went up-stairs. I heard a foot-

step on the stairs just now."

Now Amy, a few moments before, had heard a sound of tinkling glass, which seemed to come from the library. Twice, in the last day or two, she had surprised George in the act of taking a bottle and a glass from behind the books in one of the bookcases, and supposing now that he was engaged in the same operation, she had given her mother misleading indications of George's whereabouts.

Mrs. Carson now arose and passed, in a stately manner, out of the parlor and into the hallway. She was a tall, black-eyed, queenly woman of fifty. Her cheek was still smooth, her wealth of silver-gray hair was coiled upon her head in the latest Parisian fashion, and she would have been handsome had she been less

stout.

After her mother had gone, Amy wrung her hands and dabbed at her eyes with a handker-chief.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed. "I wish they all wouldn't quarrel so, and I wish that George would mend his ways. Perhaps, though, it will all be better when Uncle William comes."

#### CHAPTER II

#### THE ARRIVAL OF UNCLE WILLIAM

Lydia Thorne packed her trunks that night; but she did not leave her sister's house. Instead, she moved into the small room, next to hers, at the back of the hall. She meant to defer her departure until Uncle William had come, that she might satisfy her curiosity as to his appear-

ance and his financial standing.

On the afternoon of the twenty-sixth, Mrs. Carson, with George and Amy, repaired to the Forty-second Street Station, to meet Uncle William. Presently, the four o'clock train came in. They were standing in the vast concourse or lobby, where they could watch the people streaming through the gates. They waited until the last passenger had come through; but they saw no one who looked as Uncle William should have looked. As they were turning away, disappointed, Mrs. Carson became aware that a man was standing at her very elbow.

He was dressed in somewhat rusty and slovenly tweeds, and held a soft felt hat in his hand. He was of medium height and build, he had gray hair, a short, full beard of graying brown, and his spiritual face was illumined

with an engaging smile.

"Sarah!" said he, taking Mrs. Carson's hand.

"Are you William Carson, my husband's brother?" asked she.

"I am your husband's brother, Sarah."
"But how did you know us, William?"

"Because you were evidently a mother with her two children. Because these two young people have such a striking resemblance to their father. These should be George and Amy. Thomas should be much older in ap-

pearance."

He gazed for a moment at George and Amy. George was a tall, handsome youth, with a smooth, clean - cut face which, nevertheless, lacked somewhat in strength of character, and showed the telltale marks of dissipation. Amy was a tall, gracefully slender girl, with great heaps of brown hair, wonderful gray eyes and a countenance otherwise delightful to look upon.

Uncle William took George's hand, and gazed at him fixedly and steadily. It made George uneasy. He did not like Uncle William's look. There was something strange and out of the ordinary about it. It seemed to pierce him through and through, and read his inmost

thoughts.

"I am glad to see you, George," said Uncle William. "We will talk together by and by."

George was glad when Uncle William released his hand and turned his eyes away. The prospect of a talk with his uncle was somehow unpleasing to him. Uncle William now took both of Amy's hands, and beamed upon her with a singularly winning smile. Unlike George, she felt no uneasiness, no dislike. Instead, a feeling of well being, of contentment filled her heart. She felt as if she had known Uncle William all her life. She was sure that she never wanted him to go away.

"I see, Amy," said he, "that you are one of those girls who speak with their eyes. Your

eyes have already told me many things."

"What have they told you, Uncle William?"

"Among other things, that you and I are going to be great friends."

"What else have they told you?"

"That you are a good, amiable and conscientious girl."

"Pshaw! Uncle William, how can one read

such thoughts in a person's eyes?"

"It is not everyone who can, even in such eyes as yours. Your eyes express your very thoughts."

"Have you read George's thoughts?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Carson was now in a considerable hurry to be gone. She had been considering Uncle William's clothing and general appearance. Her estimate of his wealth had fallen many degrees, and her hopes of pecuniary assistance from him had dropped correspondingly. She was fearful now that he would read her thoughts, as he had those of George and Amy.

Uncle William now picked up a large, dilapidated, yellow leather suit case which he had deposited upon the pavement, and the party moved out of the lobby and turned toward the cab stand.

"I have engaged a taxicab," said Mrs.

Carson.

"That," said Uncle William, "was unnecessary, as far as I am concerned. You see I always walk."

Mrs. Carson's estimate of Uncle William

fell another notch.

The cab contained seats for four passengers. Mrs. Carson and Amy sat upon the back seat, and George and Uncle William faced them.

"You do not look at all like my husband,"

said Mrs. Carson.

"No," answered Uncle William, "we were

always different."

"His hair was dark, and yours is somewhat light. He had black eyes and yours are gray. Then you haven't his nose or mouth. I find it hard to believe that you are Thomas's brother."

"How is it with you, Amy?" asked Uncle William. "Is it difficult for you to realize that

I am your uncle?"

"No, it is the easiest thing in the world. I knew you the moment I looked at you."

Amy's eyes dwelt upon Uncle William's face

with an affectionate regard.

"It is strange," remarked Mrs. Carson, "that you and Thomas never saw each other all these years."

"Thomas," replied Uncle William, "knew

always where he could find me. I would have come to him at any time had he wanted me."

When the cab reached Mrs. Carson's house, and its four passengers had alighted, Uncle William, as if it were a matter of course, paid the driver. He also gave him something beside. At this evidence of financial ability and liberality, Mrs. Carson's spirits again arose. When they were come into the house, Mrs. Carson led Uncle William through the two parlors, the dining-room and the library. Her face had a woe-begone expression.

"I am positively ashamed to show you through my house," said she. "Everything is in such a dilapidated and worn-out state. I am

afraid you will think very poorly of us."

"I was thinking that your house was very

good and beautiful, Sarah."

"Nonsense!" Just look at those rugs! They are ready to drop in pieces. If I have had those rugs one year, I have had them twenty. They were nothing but American rugs in the first place. They never wear, you know. I have just got to have new rugs. I would like large Oriental rugs for the two parlors and the diningroom, and an Axminster rug for the library. Do you think, William, that an Axminster rug would do for the library?"

"I think very likely that it might."

"Then look at the walls and the woodwork of these rooms. The walls haven't been papered and the woodwork hasn't been painted in ten years. Take a look at that paper! Isn't it absurd?"

"But, Sarah, those birds and flowers are ex-

ceedingly pretty."

"But they are in very bad taste, and they are all out of date. They use nothing now but conventional figures. Now, about the woodwork. I was thinking of having it all done over in white enamel. That takes five coats, and is awfully expensive. What do you think of that kind of finish?"

"I like it very much indeed. It will cer-

tainly make the house very beautiful."

"Now, about the curtains. The front parlor curtains are absolutely nothing but rags, and those in the dining-room are the cheapest kind of Nottingham. I was thinking of getting Cluny or Marie Antoinette for both front and back. Do you like Marie Antoinette, William?"

"I admire them very much indeed. There is nothing, to my mind, so exquisite and artistic for the house, as well as for women's wear, as

those fine, delicate cobwebby laces."

"I see, William, that you and I are going to agree perfectly about all these matters. But, oh, dear! I'm afraid it is all nothing but a dream. Where is the money to come from for all these improvements? Positively, I was never so put to it in my life for funds. Just at present my income barely suffices for the ordinary expenses of the household. I am surely crazy to talk of buying any of these things."

"Doubtless," replied Uncle William, with what seemed a meaning smile, "a remedy will

be provided."

Mrs. Carson was enraptured. Uncle William was certainly a man of money. Furthermore, she decided that he was a good soul, and that he might be easily led as she wanted. The occasion also seemed propitious, and she resolved

to follow up her advantage.

"I am in a quandary," she said. "I am doubtful whether it would be advisable to spend so much money upon the house when Amy and I are in such urgent need of new wardrobes. I have worn this hat and gown so long that it has become a by-word with the neighbors. It is the same thing with Amy's clothes. The poor child is just out in society, and she should have the prettiest of things. Her hat and suit are months behind the fashions, and they are the best she has, at that."

"Oh mother!" exclaimed Amy, who had just joined them, "how can you say such things? I am sure that I dress most becomingly. I like this suit amazingly, I have plenty of nice things, and I positively wish for nothing more at

present."

"The most beautiful and costly fabrics in the world," said Uncle William, "wrought with the finest and most perfect skill, and in the most exquisite and graceful fashion, would be none too beautiful, fine and exquisite for Amy." Mrs. Carson glanced at Amy, knowingly and triumphantly.

"And now, dear William," said she, "I will

show you to your apartment."

Saying this, she led him into the front hallway, and going up one flight of stairs, showed him into a large room at the back of the house.

He gazed around the chamber. Mrs. Carson had robbed the rest of the house to make it attractive. There was a rich, thick rug upon the floor, a blue silk coverlet upon the bed, and lace shams upon the pillows. The windows were hung with shades and damask curtains, lounges and easy chairs were disposed about the room, a number of fine pictures adorned the walls, and upon the top of the dressing bureau there was a large assortment of silver-backed brushes, combs, hand mirrors, and other utensils of the toilet.

"I am afraid," said Uncle William "that this chamber is altogether too grand and luxurious for me. I shall not feel to be myself in it. You see, I have been used all my life to very humble quarters. A six-by-eight room with a bare floor, perhaps a piece of matting upon it, a narrow wooden bedstead, a wash stand with bowl and pitcher, and a small looking glass nailed upon the wall. That is what I have been accustomed to."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Carson, "I know, of course, that you have roughed it for a great part of your life. That, however, is the

more reason why you should spend your declining years in the midst of the most pleasant surroundings and with the greatest amount of comfort. From this time forth, I propose to take you in hand, and to see that nothing is lacking for your ease and well being. This chamber has been occupied, up to the present time, by my sister Lydia. When we heard that you were coming, she insisted upon giving it up to you. 'You must remember,' said she, 'that he is your husband's only brother. This is the best room in the house, and nothing is too good for him.' Those were her very words."

"Your sister Lydia must be a very kind and self-sacrificing woman," said Uncle William.

At this moment from the hallway came a sound as of the slamming of a door. Mrs. Carson coughed, and went to pass out of the apartment.

"I must leave you now," said she, as she stood in the doorway. "Dinner will be served at half past six."

#### CHAPTER III

#### SKULL AND CROSSBONES

After Uncle William had bathed and dressed, he took from his portmanteau two very old, very small and much worn books, and sat down by the window to read. One of these books was Baxter's "Saint's Rest," a copy printed in 1690, while Richard Baxter was still living. The other was the Pilgrim's Progress, printed in 1672. These two quaint volumes, bound in dilapidated rusty leather, were his most cherished possessions. He had at different times been offered large sums of money for them; but had refused to part with them at any price.

At six o'clock, he laid the book aside, and descended to the lower hallway, where he was met by George Percival. Uncle William had put on black evening clothes for dinner. His cutaway coat was somewhat shiny and worn at the seams, and his cuffs were slightly fringed at the edges. On the whole, however, his appearance was in good taste and quietly

respectable.

George led him to the back of the hallway, and into the library. When he had closed the door, and had seated Uncle William at the center table, he went to one of the bookcases, removed several books from an upper shelf, and

took from the cavity a bottle of whiskey, a

syphon bottle and two glasses.
"I thought, Uncle," said he, "that we might have a short talk before dinner, and that a nip or two, meanwhile, might not come amiss."

"No, George, you must excuse me. I never drink anything stronger than water. I will,

however, be glad to talk to you awhile."

George was somewhat disconcerted. looked at Uncle William for a moment hesitatingly, then he mixed himself a high ball and drank it off, nonchalantly and deftly. George's manner and appearance made it plain that this

was not his first nip that evening.

"And now, Uncle," said he, "I want to tell you a few things about this delightful household, in which you have taken up your abode. This is a beautiful family, I don't think. It would be like cruelty to children not to give you a few indications of what you are up against. In the first place, there is Aunt Lydia, mother's elder sister. She is tall, angular and hardfeatured. She is parsimonious to the last degree, as sour as vinegar, and has a tongue like a whip lash. She has an income of twenty-five hundred dollars, and she contributes seven hundred to the expenses of the household. She ought to give a great deal more, as she insists on having the best in the house, and she isn't satisfied with that. She is a widow and she has one son, Victor Grosvenor Thorne. He lived here up to a year ago, and then he graduated. Victor is a high-stepper, a young gentleman of varied accomplishments, and we were not in his class. He lives now, with another congenial spirit, in bachelor apartments, upon Riverside Drive. Victor is one of the head employees in a broker's office down-town, a sort of a decoy, you know. He gets a salary of three thousand dollars, and spends five. He knows every handsome chorus girl in town, and the nigger who looks through the small round hole in the front door always lets him in."

"I am afraid," said Uncle William, "that I

do not follow you."

"Uncle, your education has been sadly neglected. I was speaking about gambling houses, where they play roulette and faro. They always have a small round hole in the front door. When anyone rings, a nigger pushes up the inside shutter of the hole and looks out. If he is satisfied with the man's appearance, he lets him in.

"I see, George. I hope that you never enter

such disreputable places yourself."

"No, Uncle, they are something beyond my class. The bank only pays your humble servant a thousand dollars a year, and I have to content myself with playing the ponies."

"I don't know what you mean by playing the ponies. I should judge though, from the very name of it, that it must be a harmless and

innocent amusement."

"Sure, Uncle, nothing could be more so. But

I was speaking of Victor. Somehow or other, he manages, in the course of a year, to get from his mother the rest of her twenty-five hundred dollars. How he does it, I don't know; but he does it. When he comes to dine with her, which he does once a month or so, we all know that he needs money very badly. If he didn't, of course he wouldn't come. While he is here, he doesn't waste his opportunities. He makes love to Lily when he is not otherwise employed."

"Who is Lily?"

"Why, don't you know, Uncle William? Lily is Brother Thomas's wife. Before she was married, her name was Lily Smith, and she was a stenographer in the offices of the Manhattan Biscuit Company, where Thomas is bookkeeper. She is a good-looking girl; but vain, silly and uneducated. She never had anything before she was married. So, of course, she wants everything now. Thomas gets fifteen hundred a year, and contributes a thousand to the household fund. He therefore has very little left to spend upon Lily in the way of dress, theatres and the like. Consequently, she is discontented, envious and ill-humored. Poor old Thomas is a dull, hardworking, unenterprising grind, and will never get out of the rut in which he is working. He is the last man to have a wife like Lily. When Victor is here, she flirts with him openly. It is a joke to see them ogle each other. A number of times I have caught them talking together in dark corners. Once I saw him kiss her.

Thomas, the poor, commonplace, unimaginative, purblind fool, is the only one who hasn't noticed it. He wont know anything about it until she runs away with Victor."

"But the thing is an outrage," exclaimed

Uncle William. "It will have to stop."

"How will you stop it? By telling Thomas?"
"Thomas is the last one to be told. Never-

theless, it shall be stopped."

"I haven't spoken to you yet, Uncle, about Aunt Maria, mother's younger sister. She hung around until she was thirty-odd, waiting for someone to marry her. As no one seemed to want the privilege, she became desperate, and married a Jew named Morris Rosenfeld. They have a seven-year-old imp of a son, named Max, and they also live in this rabbit warren of a house. Morris isn't bad for a Jew, and he puts up fifteen hundred dollars toward the expenses, which is something more in proportion than the others. He is an office-holder of the city government, something in the department of public works. He gets three thousand dollars salary, and what he can squeeze out of the contractors. Morris is what they call an advanced Jew. He doesn't go to the synagogue, or keep the Jew feasts, and he eats ham and bacon. Before he married Aunt Maria, he lived on the East Side. He always carried his precinct at the primaries and upon election day, and he carries it now. Morris says that he has a number of Jew citizens there whom he votes five or ten times apiece in a day."

"But that is against the law, is it not?"

"I suppose it is, Uncky; but how, otherwise, could he hold down his office in the department of public works? I must tell you a few things about Mother. There isn't really much to say about Mother. The principal thing is that she has an income of two thousand dollars a year, and tries to make a show like five thousand. With Mother it is always what people say and think. She never goes beyond that, and she doesn't care about anything else. Dad bought this large house some years before he died, and put a mortgage on it for as much money as the house would sell for. If she would sell the house and hire a small flat, we might be comfortable and easy. That, however, would be too much of a come-down for Mother. She insists on keeping up the old barn, and in order to do it, she gets this infernal menagerie together, and makes a regular Noah's ark of it. I must tell you how she got the two thousand dollars a year. It will make you laugh. That was Dad's last stroke of business, and it was certainly a hummer. Say, Uncky, Dad was some artist, believe me."

"You surprise me, George. I never knew that your father did anything in the way of art. What was his particular province, painting, sculpture

or music?"

"Uncle William, your mind must be wandering. Dad didn't know one tune from another, and he couldn't tell a water color from an oil painting. He wasn't that kind of an artist.

What I meant was that he could trim people artistically. His motto was to do other people before they could do him. Do you get me?"

"I think that I understand you, George."

"Well, I was going to tell you how mother got her two thousand dollars a year. For the last five years of his life, Dad was an agent for the People's Provident Savings Life Insurance Company. The principal business of this company is to issue policies of fifty, one hundred and two hundred dollars to poor people. They sell these policies upon the instalment plan, and collect from the holders ten, twenty-five, or fifty cents a week, according to the size of the policy. When the aforesaid poor people get sick or lose their employment, they can no longer pay the premiums, and the policies become null and void. This happens in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. You can therefore see that the business of the company is a very profitable one. It was Dad's affair to sell these policies and to collect the ten, twenty-five, or fifty cents a week. He had for his share about a quarter of everything he collected, which wasn't so bad, as far as it went. Dad, though, was a man who was always on the lookout for big things. According to his ideas, the company was nothing but an organized band of robbers, and he saw no reason why he shouldn't rob them in turn. Dad had heart trouble, and knew that he couldn't live over two or three years at the outside. He therefore took out a policy of twenty thousand dollars with the company which employed him. To do this, it was necessary to grease the ways. Perhaps he slipped two or three of the medical examiners a hundred dollars apiece. Who knows? When Dad died, the president of the company, a sleek, fat, very respectable old sinner, found out that he had heart trouble, and refused to pay the policy. Now here is where Dad's smartness comes in. He had been careful to retain a lot of letters, receipts, and one thing and another, relating to the dealings of the People's Provident Savings Life Insurance Company with the poor people. Before he died, he gave these documents to Mother, and told her to threaten the company with their publication, in case they refused to pay. It worked like a charm. When she notified them that she had the papers, and told them what they were, Old Simpson, the president, made a bee line for her The sweat poured down his face, his hands trembled, and he couldn't hand the money over fast enough. That's the way Mother got her two thousand a year, and you see I wasn't wrong, when I said that Dad was a slick artist."

"George," said Uncle William, I am extremely sorry to hear you tell these things about your father. I regret that you should talk of him as you do. You evidently have very little respect for his memory. Do you not remember your father as he was when you were a child of four or five?"

"Of course I do. Why shouldn't I? What

has that to do with it?"

"How did your father seem to you when you were a little child? Was he not to you everything that was fine and kind and splendid and noble, a sort of a prince, a king or an emperor?"

"Yes, I suppose he was. I thought he was

about as good and big as they make 'em."

"Then, George, when you think or talk of your father, think of him and talk of him as he was when you were a child, as he was before he became worn and tired and hardened and discouraged. I have noticed that you are very prone to speak ill of people. In all your talk to-night about your relatives, there has been no single word of commendation. It has pained me greatly."
"You wouldn't have me lie about them, would

you?"

"There is no need of it. If you can't speak well of them, say nothing at all. That is a good rule."

While George had been talking, Uncle William had drawn the whiskey bottle toward him, had picked up a pencil from the table, and was sketching, or scribbling upon the white label. He now replaced the bottle in the place from whence he had taken it. George picked it up, and was about to pour himself another drink, but paused, with staring eyes, and hanging jaws.

"Wha-what's that?" he stuttered. "Say, that's awful bad taste, you know. What did yuh do it for?"

He put the bottle down without pouring a drink. Uncle William had drawn upon the label a perfect and startling picture of a death's head and cross bones.

"It is only something that the designer forgot to put on the label," said he.

#### CHAPTER IV

## UNCLE WILLIAM'S GOLD MINE

George's mother now came to the library door and called Uncle William into the back drawing room, where he found the rest of the family assembled, and awaiting the announcement of dinner. He crossed over at once to Thomas and his wife and shook their hands heartily.

"I knew you at once, Thomas," said he. "You are the image of your father when he was your age. I am delighted to see you and delighted to meet your wife. You have chosen a beautiful woman for your helpmate, and of

course she is as good as she is comely."

Dot was holding her mother's hand. Uncle William raised her from the floor and kissed her.

"Dot," said he, "I am your great-uncle. We are going to be good friends, and we will have fine times together."

"You are not such a big uncle," said Dot. "Great-uncles are not always big, Dot."

Uncle William was now introduced to Morris Rosenfeld, Mrs. Rosenfeld and Max Rosenfeld.

"Mr. and Mrs. Rosenfeld," said he, "I have heard much of you, and I look forward with much pleasure to our better acquaintance."

He put his hand upon the boy's curly head.

"I know," he continued, "that Max and I are going to know each other very well. He is an uncommonly fine boy and seems to favor both of you. Max and Dot and I are going to have some famous games, and I am going to tell them some wonderful stories."

"Mrs. Thorn," said Uncle William, when he was made acquainted with that prim and austere lady, "I am sincerely glad to know the sister of my brother's wife. I hope that you are well, and that your son is also. I am much desirous of

meeting him at no distant period."

Uncle William had now greeted all the members of the family whom he had not previously met. His remarks to them had been simple and commonplace; but there was something of sincerity and gentle courtliness in his tone and manner which had made a most favorable impression.

"I think," said Morris Rosenfeld aside to George, "that your uncle is some man, what! I think I'm going to like him."

"He would be a good deal better if he had

a drop or two of sporting blood in him."

"Never mind that sporting blood, George. That makes not always the best man. You have it yourself, not so? I do not see that it has done so much for you."

Dinner was now announced by a servant. Uncle William offered his arm to his sister-inlaw, and the two led the way to the dining room. Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson sat at the head of the table; on her right, in order, were Uncle William, Mrs. Rosenfeld, Mr. Rosenfeld and George Percival, on her left were Thomas Grosvenor, Mrs. Carson, the younger, Dot and Mrs. Thorne. Amy sat at the foot of the table.

The dinner served in honor of Uncle William was an excellent one. In fact, it was a better dinner than ever before had been served in the house. There were clams upon the half shell, soup, fish, entrees, roast, dessert, coffee and cheese. A waitress carried around the dinner in tureens and platters and helped the diners in turn. She commenced always with Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson, then she helped Uncle William, and from Uncle William went to Thomas Carson, on the opposite side of the table. In this way, she alternated, first upon one side, then upon the other, until she had reached the foot of the table. This was a wise and happy arrangement which had been instituted for the purpose of avoiding unpleasant faultfinding and bickering. When, however, the waitress arrived at the foot of the table, there was usually not much choice or quantity of viands remaining. For this reason, no one cared to sit at the foot of the table, and Amy had always taken that place, because she was an amiable girl and a girl of a self-sacrificing nature.

Uncle William now looked around and saw that the boy, Max, was sitting alone at a small table alongside the wall. The urchin had a

sullen and rebellious look.

"Hullo, Max!" exclaimed Uncle William, "I see that they have put you in the post of honor. That is the very place where I would like to sit. I am going to ask your Aunt to let me sit with you sometimes. It would be great fun."

The boy laughed, and presently was eating

with great good humor.

Uncle William did not touch his oysters, soup or fish. He contented himself with celery, bread and some round, Parisian potato balls which came with his fish.

"Why, William," exclaimed his sister-in-law, presently, "you are not eating your dinner. You seem to have no appetite. I am afraid that you

are not well."

"Sarah," answered he, "I am feeling very well and I have a good appetite. I do not like to make myself conspicuous and show myself different from other people; but, since you have called attention to me, I see that I will have to. The fact is that I am a vegetarian."

Lily Smith Carson tittered, the other members of the family gazed at Uncle William as if

they thought him a very queer specimen.

The elder Mrs. Carson made a mental calculation as to the lessened cost of boarding Uncle William on account of his abstaining from meat, fish and fowl. The result, evidently, was satisfactory, for she smiled a satisfied smile.

"I suppose," remarked Mrs. Thorne, "that you do it on account of your health. I have

heard it said by some people that vegetarians live longer than other people. Do you think

that that is true?"

"I do not know," answered Uncle William. "To tell the truth, I am not a vegetarian on account of my health. I am a vegetarian only because I do not want any living creature killed that I may eat. If I should eat meat, fish or fowl, I could not help thinking all the while of the pain and fright of the poor creatures when they were killed. Once I was walking along the edge of a wood, and I saw a hunter shoot a rabbit. The poor, small animal turned a summersault, and then tried to crawl into the wood. He had such a look of fear and agony that it moved me to the heart. Presently his eyes glazed and he lay still. I have never forgotten it."

Uncle William looked around the board as if expecting to find glances of sympathy for the rabbit. There were none. The expression upon the different faces should have told him that his story was regarded as being in very bad taste.

There was one exception.

"The poor, poor little creature!" exclaimed

Amy.

"Uncle William," remarked Thomas Carson, presently, "I understand that you have spent the greater part of your life in the far West. In what state were you located, and what was your principal line of business?"

"I had no particular headquarters, Thomas.

I was a sort of a nomad, wandering here, there and everywhere. Neither was I engaged for long in any settled business. I was in the habit of turning my hand to anything which came my In the last year, though, I was located in a town named Boulder, in the State of Colorado. While I was there, I had a very singular experience, and it was this experience which finally determined me to bid good-bye to the Western states. Some eight months ago, I had fifty thousand dollars to invest, and I decided to put the money into a gold mine. I had never dipped into gold mines before, and I wanted to see what they were like."

Uncle William mentioned the sum of fifty thousand dollars as if it were the merest trifle. At once every one at the table was all attention. Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson glanced at the expectant faces upon each side of the board with a proud and superior air, as if she would call attention to the fact that this was her brother-

in-law who was talking.

"It being noised about," continued Uncle William, "that I was going to put fifty thousand dollars into a gold mine, I had many applications from people who wanted to sell their mines. It was astonishing how many mines there were for sale. Among others, there came to me three men, named Brown, Smith and Robinson. These three men owned a half interest in a mine near Cripple Creek, called the White Horse Mine. This mine was capitalized at two hundred thousand dollars. There were forty thousand shares at five dollars each. They owned twenty thousand and a man named White owned the other twenty thousand. This Mr. White was in poor health, and wished to sell his share in the mine and go east to live. It was a paying mine, and though the shares were worth something more than par, he offered to sell them, if they were sold to one person, at five dollars each. I was impressed favorably by the fact that Smith, Brown and Robinson did not wish to sell their own shares. They simply wished me to buy Mr. White's interest. Upon my raising the objection that I only had fifty thousand dollars to invest, and that Mr. White's shares would cost one hundred thousand, they told me that I could borrow the other fifty thousand dollars at the bank, by putting up the twenty thousand shares of stock as collateral. I enquired about this matter and, finding that it was an everyday occurrence, and the usual and recognized way of arranging such matters, I bought the hundred thousand dollars worth of stock of Mr. White, borrowed the fifty thousand dollars of the bank, and put up the stock as security. We now held a meeting of the stockholders, and elected six directors of the company, of which I was one. The directors then got together and elected Mr. Robinson, President, Mr. Smith, Vice-president, and Mr. Brown, treasurer. I was very well satisfied with this arrangement, as I knew nothing about min-

ing, and they knew all about it. Very soon after this, the gold production of the mine began to fall off. Upon enquiring the reason, I was told that the vein had narrowed appreciably, and that a lot of water had got into the mine, which rendered the working of it difficult. In a few days the president of the bank sent for me, and told me that the stock of the White Horse mine had gone down from par to seventy cents on the dollar. He also told me that he would have to sell out my stock, if it went much lower. I asked him what made the stock go down, and he said that it was because someone was selling it. When I asked him who was selling it, he told me to ask Brown, Smith and Robinson. I went to see these gentlemen; but they denied that they had sold any, and showed me that the certificates for the whole twenty thousand shares were still in their possession. When I saw the President of the bank again, I told him what I had learned; but he did not seem convinced. From his talk I found out that people can sell stock and yet not sell it. They call these sales 'wash sales,' and they do it by matching orders. A man will order a broker on the stock exchange to sell say two thousand shares of a certain stock at seventy. At the same time, he will order another broker to buy two thousand shares of the same stock at seventy. This is what Brown, Smith and Robinson had been doing. They had sold the stock to themselves. Also, each day, they had sold it at a lower price.

At this moment, the President of the bank was called to the telephone. When he came back, he informed me that the stock of the White Horse mine had gone down to fifty cents on the dollar, and that my stock had been sold at that figure. It seems that, in order to protect the interests of the bank, he had sent my shares to his broker, with orders to sell them, if they should go down to fifty. I then asked the banker what was coming to me, and he answered that nothing was coming to me. I then asked him if he knew who had bought my twenty thousand shares, and he again told me that I had better see Brown, Smith and Robinson. When I saw these gentlemen, they owned up quite readily that they had bought my twenty thousand shares. They were very merry about it, said that they had observed that my eye teeth hadn't been cut, and that they had thought they might as well do it as any one else. Well, I went home and sat down and thought the matter out. The more I thought about it, the more humorous the whole thing looked to me. I began to laugh, and I laughed and I laughed. I never had had such a good laugh before. These three men had taken every dollar I had in the world; but they had been so ingenious and so skillful about it, that I could not help but admire them."

Uncle William with a seraphic smile upon his countenance, looked around the table, expecting that everyone would join with him in his appreciation of the humor of his experience. He was mistaken. They did not do so. Upon the faces of those present were varying looks of anger, mortification, astonishment, satisfaction and triumph. Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson's face became red and then white, Lily Smith Carson again tittered, Mrs. Thorne sneered audibly, Morris Rosenfeld leaned forward upon the table and stared at Uncle William as if he were an animal of some strange species, George Percival swore under his breath.

"How long ago was this?" asked Mrs. Sarah Grosvenor Carson, presently, in a cold and

ominous voice.

"About a month ago," answered Uncle William, guilelessly. "After such a disillusionment I determined to come east and spend the rest of my days in peace and quiet. The west was no place for me. The people out there are

altogether too shrewd and knowing."

His sister-in-law now arose, thus giving the signal that the dinner was at an end. She turned and passed out of the dining-room, without waiting for or noticing Uncle William. The rest of the family, with the exception of Amy, followed her example. Amy came and took Uncle William's arm, and piloted him, with an affectionate manner, into the drawing room.

#### CHAPTER V

## SAINT PETER AND THE BARON

Mrs. Sara Carson went upstairs to her room, and shortly afterward sent for Amy. George Percival left the house, and the other five grown people began to arrange for a game of bridge. They did not ask Uncle William to join them. It was just as well that they did not, as he knew

no single game of cards.

Being left absolutely to his own resources, and the assembled company having shown him by their manner that they could very well get along without him, he went softly along the hallway and up the stairs to his chamber. He now procured one of his favorite volumes, and then, as there was no reading light in his room, he descended again to the first floor, and going into the library, lighted the electric table lamp, and sat down to read.

After he had read for a half hour, he heard the front door bell ring, and the front door open and shut. Then steps came along the hallway, the library door opened, and Amy, followed by a young man, entered the library. He was a tall, straightbacked young man with a smooth and pleasant face.

"Why, Uncle William," exclaimed Amy, "I didn't know that you were here. We will go

somewhere else, so as not to hinder your

reading."

"Amy," said Uncle William, with a mock severity, "there are some things which are more important than reading. Therefore, it is I who

will go somewhere else."

"Uncle William, you will do nothing of the kind. In the first place, I want to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Edward Snow. Edward, this is Uncle William, the uncle which I have been talking about."

Edward Snow took Uncle William's hand with a good firm grip. He was a hearty, likable sort of fellow, and the old gentleman returned

the clasp with interest.

"Snow, Snow," exclaimed Uncle William. "That is a good old English name. Years ago I knew several families of that name in this city and in the vicinity. There were the Robert Snows, who were bankers, and the James Snows, who were clothiers. Also, there were the Staten Island Snows, and the Long Island Snows. It does not happen, does it, that you come from either of these families?"

"Oh, dear no, not a bit of it," answered Snow, laughing. "I came from a small village, up State, in Jefferson County, about five years

ago."

"That is good. If it were not for young men like you coming here all the time from the country, and giving us new vitality, we would soon be in a poor way. I hope that you have

prospered in what you came for. You certainly

look as if you had."

"I haven't done so badly. I am in the druggist and apothecary business. I served my apprenticeship in my home town and here, I have my diploma, and since a year past, I have had a small store of my own on Sixth Avenue, near Thirty-ninth Street."

"That is fine. I am glad that you told me. When one wants medicine, one wants it in a hurry, and your shop is not so far away. I

shall know where to go."

Uncle William now took his book, and moved toward the door.

"Uncle William!" cried Amy. "You are

not going. I positively forbid it."

"It is my duty to go," answered he, with a meaning smile. "When duty calls, I always obey. One is only young once, and the privileges and

customs of youth should be held sacred."

Amy blushed, and Edward Snow grinned. Uncle William went out of the door, and closed it, carefully. He passed along the hallway and looked into the front parlor. It was dark, excepting for the light which came through the sliding doors from the back parlor. The two children, Max and Dot, were standing in the gloom, looking out of the window into the street, with their noses pressed against the glass. There was a large easy chair near the window. Uncle William went to it, and sat down.

"Now, Dot and Max," said he, "we will have some stories."

The children received the announcement with joy. Amy was the one who usually entertained them. Her young man had come, and they had been taught by their parents to banish themselves at such times. They were consequently lonely and depressed in spirits. Uncle William took Dot upon his knee, and had Max sit upon a stool beside him. Then he told them a fairy story.

"Now," said he, after he had finished with it, "I will tell you another kind of a story.

This is not a fairy story."

"Is it a really and truly story?" asked Dot. "Yes, it is a really and truly story. It has happened many times. Perhaps the people were not all of them always the same; but that makes no difference. This story is about Saint Peter, the Baron, the boy and the top."

"Whose top was it?" asked Dot.

"Silly!" exclaimed Max. "It was the boy's, of course. Saint Peter and the Baron wouldn't have a top."

Uncle William then commenced to tell the

story, and this is it:

Baron of Brieg and Waldeck by the sea, And Lord of Harburg and of Glatz was he. In his domain ten thousand acres lay, Ten thousand souls were subject to his sway. His form was portly and his look severe, His speech sententious and his morals clear.

Proud of his lineage, prouder of his gold, Each day he grew more stern and stiff and cold. Hard toward the poor but princely when it came To some great charity which bore his name. And so he grew to three score years and ten, Honored by church and state and praised of men.

At this point, Uncle William paused.

"That story," announced Max, with an air of superior wisdom, "is in poetry."

"I am afraid," said Uncle William, "that

competent judges would not say so."

"Is that all there is of it?" asked Dot, con-

temptuously.

"No, that is only the beginning. This is the rest of it:"

The baron from his castle came one day,
Mounted his great white horse and rode away,
Rode to the town to judge and regulate
A dozen matters of important weight.
There was a widow to be dispossessed,
A poacher beaten till the rogue confessed,
There was a vacant prebend to be filled,
A meeting of a charitable guild.
There was a debtor to be put in jail,
And goods of others sold at sheriff's sale.

'Twas Autumn and the fields were sere and brown, As the old Baron rode away to town. With proud content he gazed upon the land Which, far as eye could see, on every hand, Forest and valley, river, plain and hill, Was his outright or subject to his will. At last, while passing through a leafless wood, He came to where a lowly cabin stood.

And there upon the moss-grown porch he spied A little barefoot boy who sobbed and cried; A ragged child, blue-eved, with head of tow Who looked the picture of distress and woe. The baron paused a moment and called out: "Hey! what's this pother and this noise about?" "Father's a-chopping trees," the urchin said, "Off somewhere in the wood and mother's dead. I have no toys, there's no one here to play And I am lonely by myself all day." "Ho! nonsense! fudge!" the baron cried and then Whipped up his steed and cantered on again.

Arrived in town, a busy day he spent, Then homeward turned with virtuous content. Hard by the city gates he drew the rein, For a strange whim had crept into his brain. With furtive mien he sought a dingy shop And spent a penny for a wooden top.

Now faintly red the dying sunset glowed, As once more through the darkening wood he rode. He reached the cabin and the urchin still Sat, a quaint, lonely form upon the sill. The baron held his steed and flung the toy Upon the well worn path before the boy. "Here, boy, take that!" he cried. The urchin took The top and held it with a puzzled look. Then the great baron, with impatient frown And no light trouble, from his horse got down, Laid to one side his bag and riding crop, And taught the wondering child to spin the top. Which done, he left him on his play intent; Mounted his steed again and homeward went.

That night the baron died, and, strange to tell, That very night the urchin died as well. Along the shadowy way to heaven they passed,

The man in front the youngster coming last.
The baron was so big, the child so small,
The baron never saw the boy at all.
At Heaven's gate the baron cried, "What, ho!"
And struck the portals a resounding blow.
Then, as there came no answering sound, once more
He cried aloud and beat upon the door.
At last a footstep sounded from afar,
Then came the clank and groan of bolt and bar.
The door swung inward for a narrow space,
And the small opening showed St. Peter's face.

"Who are you and what would you here?" asked he. "I am the Lord of Brieg, as you may see. Why this delay? Quick! Fling the portals wide! For I'm in haste and I would pass inside." Saint Peter barred the way, austere and grim. "Nay, not so fast," 'twas thus he answered him. "Folks do not take the door of Heaven by storm, But enter with bowed head and suppliant form, And furthermore, the man who enters here Must have his title reasonably clear. For this we now will add up your account, And see to what your rightful claims amount." Then turned St. Peter to an aged clerk Who, standing near, was bending o'er his work. "Take down," said he, "the book wherein is writ The baron's record and examine it." The clerk reached upward to a shelf and took And spread upon his desk a mighty book; He found the baron's page with trembling hand And every line meticulously scanned. Then down another and another page, Went slowly, till it seemed a very age. "Well," said St. Peter, "If your task is through, Add every page and strike a balance true; Then tell me how the baron's record stands, And what amount of credit he commands."

"Tis useless quite," the weary clerk replied, "There's not an item on the credit side." "Ho, ho," the baron spoke, "Your books are wrong. I've walked a godly path my whole life long. I held high office both in church and state, I was a deacon and I passed the plate. I built a church, endowed it with my rents, Founded a college, reared at vast expense A convent. Far and wide extends the fame Of the great charities which bear my name." "Aye," said the aged clerk, "the man is right. These things are written here in black and white." "Then," spoke the baron, "If my words are true, Fling wide the portals, please, and let me through." "Nay," quoth the Saint. "These deeds of pomp and pride Are charged against you on the debit side." This said, he now prepared to close the gate. But, as the baron turned disconsolate, St. Peter spied the small boy standing near. "Ho, boy!" cried he, "whence and how came you here?" "I came from earth, the way I could not find; I saw the man and followed on behind." "What have you in your hand?" the one you hide In the torn pocket hanging at your side?" "A top." "A top? Who gave it to you, now?" "The baron gave it me." "Where, when and how?" The boy then told him how the cottage stood, Cheerless and bare within the leafless wood, And how he sat there, sad, the livelong day, And saw the baron come and ride away. Then how he came again and brought the toy, And taught him how to spin it. When the boy Had told his tale, "Good Lord!" St. Peter cried, "My soul is vexed, my patience sorely tried. Look you!" he thundered at the trembling clerk, "Is this the way that you perform your work?" Search once again with most exceeding care, For this important entry should be there."

The clerk once more the mighty volume took, And scanned its pages with an anxious look. His palsied finger down the columns passed, Until the missing item showed at last, Upon the credit side, grotesquely small, Down at the end of the last page of all. "Well," spoke St. Peter, "tis a margin thin, But this poor, single credit lets you in." Then were the gates of Heaven wide open thrown; The baron took the boy's hand in his own, And chastened, contrite, sad and humbly wise, Passed through into the streets of Paradise.

"Uncle William," asked Dot, after he had finished. "Did Saint Peter let the boy take the top into Heaven with him?"

"Of course he did. Why should he not?"

"And did the baron and the boy spin the

top when they were in Heaven?"

"No, it wasn't necessary. When the boy got into Heaven, he found a lot of other children there to play with; so he didn't have to trouble the baron about it."

Amy, whose young man had gone, and who had stolen into the room unobserved, and had sat in the further corner, and listened to the

story, now spoke.

"Oh, Uncle William," said she, "why did you not let me know that you were going to tell a story, and particularly such a story as that? I would have had Edward stay and listen to it. That story is for grown-up people as well as children. There is no one but would be the better for hearing it. You must tell it to him,

the next time he comes. I will take it as a favor.

I will be infinitely obliged."

"Amy, one word from you is enough, and it shall be as you say. Between you and me there shall be no talk of favors and obligations."

Just then the sliding doors between the front and back parlors were pushed apart, and Mrs.

Carson, the elder, appeared in the opening.

"William Carson," she exclaimed, "why have you kept Dot and Max up so late? It is half past nine. You should know better. Besides that, you have interfered with our game with your continuous droning talk. I myself have made several errors. Amy, take the children to bed at once."

Saying this, Mrs. Carson closed the doors

with a bang.

"Come to bed, children," said Amy, extending her hand.

"I will come, too," said Uncle William. He lifted Dot to his shoulder, Amy took Max by the hand, and thus they went upstairs.

# CHAPTER VI

# A READJUSTMENT

After breakfast, the next morning, Mrs. Carson, the elder, called Uncle William into

the library.

"There is something which I must talk to you about," announced she, after she had closed the doors. "It is a very disagreeable subject.

I scarcely know how to begin."

"Without doubt," said Uncle William, "it's disagreeable quality lies only in your imagination. Let me know what is troubling you, Sarah dear. I will warrant that you are making a mountain out of a mole hill."

"It is about my sister, Lydia, William. You will recollect my telling you that she had given

up her room to you."

"Yes, I recollect it, and I have been thinking ever since what a dear kind soul she must be."

"She is all that and more. She changed from the room which you are occupying to the small one adjoining it, at the end of the hall. Now Lydia is some years older than I, and she is not as strong and as well as I would like to have her. She has always been used to certain luxuries and conveniences, and I can see, though she has said nothing about it, that the change from her large, light, airy room to such cramped

quarters has had a most depressing effect upon her. I noticed it at breakfast this morning. She was not as bright, or as cheerful as usual. She really had a sort of faded and drooping look."

"Sarah, I am delighted that you have spoken to me about the matter. I am also extremely sorry that I have discommoded your dear sister. How thoughtless of me to accept such sacrifice and abnegation! The matter must be remedied immediately. She must have her room back at once. Sarah, put me anywhere you want. The smallest, poorest chamber in the house is sufficient for my needs."

"William, you have taken a great weight from my mind. I thought that you might object. You have certainly made my task much less

disagreeable."

"Sarah dear, why should I object? I did not come here to incommode you and the rest of the family, or to give you trouble. I came, rather, to make all your lives pleasanter and more agreeable. I suppose, Sarah, that you have already settled upon the chamber which I am to occupy. Have the kindness to show it to me, and I will get my few things together and change at once."

"Very well, William. I will, at least, say this for you, that you seem to be of an accom-

modating nature."

Mrs. Carson led the way up-stairs to the second story, then she proceeded to the third story, and finally to the fourth story. There

was a little hall bed room at the top of the stairway, in the back of the house. Into this she took Uncle William.

"This is the room I had thought of," said she. The chamber was about eight feet by ten in size. It had one window which looked out upon the back yards of the neighborhood, and upon the roofs of the houses in the next street, it contained a small wooden bedstead, one straightbacked chair, and a wooden wash stand, with pitcher and bowl. Above the wash stand upon the wall there was a looking glass about ten inches square. There had been lace curtains upon the window; but Mrs. Carson had removed them, leaving nothing but the shade. She had also taken a silk counterpane from the bed, and had put an old rug upon the floor in place of the comparatively new one which had been there before.

Uncle William's face radiated with satis-

faction and pleasure.

"This chamber is certainly delightful," exclaimed he. "I know that I shall enjoy myself here immensely."

Mrs. Carson thought, at first, that he was

speaking sarcastically.

"Are you really satisfied with it?" she asked.

"I certainly am, Sarah dear. Nothing could be more cozy and home like. It has several advantages over the one down-stairs. In the first place, it is such a room as I have always been accustomed to. I shall feel more like myself here. Your sister's room is altogether too grand and luxurious. I felt really very much out of place in such a chamber. In the second place, it is vastly quieter here. I always go to bed at nine o'clock, and I shall sleep the sleep of the blessed. Last night you were playing cards until eleven, and your talking kept me awake. Your voices were low, and I could scarcely hear you; but I was worried all the time with the thought that you were modifying your tones upon my account."

Uncle William went to the window, raised

the shade, and opened the sash.

"How cool, crisp and fine the air is!" he exclaimed. "It is undoubtedly much more pure up here than upon the level of the second story. And what a view! I can see all the back yards in the block. I can see shrubs and grass and flowers, and trellises with grape vines. Even the clothes hanging upon the lines are interesting. From looking at the clothes, I can tell how many and what kind of people there are in the different families. There is also a fine view of all the roof tops opposite. Do you see the white and black cat, with a black nose, sitting upon yonder coping? Hasn't he a smug and self satisfied look? There are also lots of sparrows upon the eaves. I shall feed them. I love to feed birds, dogs, cats, squirrels and other small animals. The poor, helpless creatures are always hungry. They never get enough to eat."

Uncle William now descended to the second story, got his things together into his suit case, and carried them to his new chamber. He arranged such of them as he could upon the wash stand, stowed the rest in the wash stand drawer, and in the space beneath, and set his suit case upon end for a table. He now found that he had left one of his two favorite books down stairs the night before, and he descended to fetch it. After searching vainly in the front parlor, he went through the back parlor, to reach the library. As he was about to enter, he saw Lily Smith Carson come into the library from the hallway. Evidently she did not see him; for she went to one corner of the room, where the telephone stood, picked up the telephone, and put the receiver to her ear.

"Give me five, six, eight, one, Cortland," said she. "Hullo! is this Horton and Field?

I want to speak with Mr. Thorne."

She spoke in a low tone of voice, so low that he could not have heard her words, had he not stood immediately outside the open library door.

"Is that you, Victor?" she continued. "How are you? Oh, I feel first rate now, though I had a beastly headache last night. Say, he isn't coming home to lunch to-day. You know whom I mean. Will you? That's good. I shall expect you. Listen! Do you remember the rich uncle I was telling you about? He came yesterday, and oh! it is such a joke. I am dying to tell you about it. Dear mother-in-law is furious,

and Aunt Maria and Aunt Lydia are filled with

unholy joy."

Uncle William stole through the parlor to the front hall, and silently ascended to his room. Five minutes afterward, he came down again, took his hat from the rack, and left the house. Lily Smith Carson was still talking as he did so.

Uncle William was away from the house all the morning. When he returned, he found Mrs. Carson, the elder, sitting upon one of the stone copings of the porch. She was evidently awaiting him, for she motioned him to take a seat

upon the opposite coping.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "I am so glad that you have come. I have been waiting for you a half hour, and it was absolutely necessary for me to see you before luncheon. I am in trouble again. It seems to me that I get out of one predicament only to find myself in another."

"I hope," said Uncle William, soothingly, "that your present difficulty is no more serious than the one you spoke of this morning. Let me know what it is, and we will make short

work of it."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I am glad, at any rate, that you show a disposition to come half way to meet me. The trouble now is with Morris, sister Maria's husband."

"Sarah, I am grieved to hear that there is something wrong with Mr. Rosenfeld. Can I do anything to help you out in the matter?"

"Yes, William, you are the only one who

can set matters straight. Of course you know that Morris is a Hebrew. On that account he is unusually sensitive. He always thinks that people are trying to put upon him, because of his nationality. Unfortunately I have been chosen by the rest of the family to regulate all the matters of the household; so that the brunt of everything falls upon me. I thought that I had matters all nicely arranged, and now we are all up in the air again. Morris has always sat next me upon my right hand. So that you could have the post of honor, I put Max at the small table and seated Morris in his son's place. I see now that Morris and Maria feel deeply slighted, and I don't know how I can arrange matters without placing you somewhere else and seating Morris in his old place."

"Sarah dear, why do you make so much out of a trifle? My first thought is to oblige you, and you must know that I would be willing to

sit anywhere."

"I have thought, William of putting you at the foot of the table. If Morris takes your place, George could move up to where Morris sits now, and Amy could occupy George's chair, next to you and at your left hand."

"That would be delightful, Sarah. I will be opposite you and next to Amy. I can't think of anything pleasanter. Say no more about it.

The matter is arranged."

That noon Thomas Carson did not come home, also, by a singular chance, Victor Thorne came to lunch with his mother. He always seemed to come when Thomas was absent. Dot sat in her father's place and Victor took Dot's place. This brought him between his mother and Lily Smith Carson. Victor was a tall, well-dressed, smooth-faced, dark-haired and dark-eyed young man. He looked like a hero of the moving pictures, such a one as the girls keep in their minds and follow from theatre to theatre.

Uncle William was only two seats removed from Victor, and the old man could not but notice the intimacy which existed between him and Lily Smith Carson. On several occasions it seemed to him that the two might be holding

hands under the table.

"I hear, Mr. Thorne," said Uncle William presently, "that you are a broker. Many things, good and bad, have been said about brokers, and I must confess that the most that I have heard about them has been to their disadvantage. I suppose though that there are honest men among them, as there are in all other kinds of business."

"I am afraid that you have been misinformed," replied Victor, with a surreptitious wink toward the persons at his right. "There are probably more honest men among the brokers than in any other profession. In our business honesty is the first requisite. In fact, no broker may be admitted to the board unless he is thoroughly and superlatively honest."

"You astonish me, Mr. Thorne. I am very

much pleased to find that I have been in error, and I own that I stand corrected. It being then a fact that honesty is the one chief requirement of your profession, why is not that profession an ideal one for our youth? Then again, if young men are honest in business matters, as they would have to be if they were members of your profession, they are likely to be honest in all the other affairs of life. A great many people do not realize that the command 'Thou shalt not steal' refers to other things beside property."

Mrs. Lydia Grosvenor Thorne had ignored

Uncle William up to that moment.

"I think," said she, with a scornful look, and with acid tone, "that it is exceedingly dishonest for an able-bodied man to live at the expense of his relatives."

"Such a man," asserted Uncle William, "is,

without doubt, a very dishonest character."

Shortly after luncheon, Uncle William went out. When he returned to the house, which he did at six o'clock, he was met in the front hallway by the elder Mrs. Carson.

"Oh, William," she exclaimed, "I have another favor to ask of you. I am absolutely

ashamed of myself; but I can't help it."

"Sarah, you must not speak of anything I do for you as a favor. It is always my duty and pleasure to meet your wishes, whatever they may be."

"It is this, William. My sister Maria is

a very soft-hearted creature. Max is her only child and she is like a hen with one chicken. She has been feeling very sad about having Max sit all alone by himself at the side table. She was crying about it this afternoon. She is afraid the little fellow will not eat. Could you not take his place for a little while, and let Max sit in his own seat? His mother will feel so much better. It will be only until we can get another leaf for the table. Then there will be room for all of us."

"Of course," answered Uncle William, with a pleasant smile, "I will take the boy's place. Why should you make such a great thing out of it. I assure you, Sarah, that I shall enjoy myself there. And now, my dear sister-in-law, since everything is arranged so happily, how much shall I contribute to the general fund? How much shall I pay toward the household expenses?

What amount do you think is right?"

Mrs. Carson was very much astonished that Uncle William should offer to pay anything. She had supposed him altogether without means. She pondered a moment, and the idea came to her that he would depart from the house, if she

set the figure high enough.

"I think," said she, "that five hundred dollars a year would be about right. That would be about ten dollars a week. Of course, you will understand that this is no boarding house. Far from it. We have simply assembled ourselves together in this large house, because we love each other. We wish to be near each other, and we each contribute of our means an equitable sum for the common good."

Uncle William drew out a shabby pocket book, and took from it a worn and disreputable

ten dollar bill.

"Here is for the first week," said he. "It is certainly not more than my share. It is altogether cheap and reasonable."

Mrs. Carson could see that the pocket book contained nothing more than the one bill, and, for a moment, she had a twinge of conscience.

"Are you sure," asked she, "that you can afford it? Are you sure that you are not robbing

yourself?"

"Nonsense, Sarah. Do not worry about me. You must not suppose, just because I lost a lot of money, that I am absolutely without means. Besides, I am going into business. I expect to have all the money that is necessary, not only for my own needs, but for the helping of my friends in a small way."

"But what kind of business can you expect

to get into, William?"

"I do not know yet. I was looking around this morning, and all the afternoon. I have really had several propositions. I am going to decide to-morrow."

Mrs. Carson looked at him doubtingly and pityingly. She evidently did not believe much in the possibility of his going into business.

That night Uncle William sat at the small

table beside the wall. He did not join in the conversation. He contented himself with nodding, winking and smiling at the two children. Max in a whisper asked permission of his mother to sit with Uncle William; but was sternly repressed and silenced.

## CHAPTER VII

### A PRESCRIPTION FOR AMY

That night, Edward Snow came again to call upon Amy. Amy left Uncle William with the two children in the front parlor, and took Edward into the library. After remaining there but five minutes, the two came forth again. They passed along the hallway, without speaking to each other, and Amy let Edward out of the front door. Then she ran hastily up the stairs. At nine o'clock she came down and took the children to bed. She was subdued and silent and her eyes looked as if she had been crying.

The next morning at breakfast she ate scarcely anything. She had a downcast look and answered in monosyllables. The rest of the company did not notice her unusual behavior. They were too much taken up with their own affairs. Uncle William noticed it, because he was thinking about her, and had been thinking about her, since the night before. After breakfast, he waylaid her craftily in the library.

"Now, Amy child," said he, "tell me all

about it."

"All about what? Uncle William," she asked, with an innocent air.

"Tell me what you have been crying about,

and why you are so sorrowful."

She laughed a scornful little laugh.

"Why, Uncle William, the idea is ridiculous.

However could you think any such thing?"

"Amy, you must not pretend any longer. You act and look as if you had lost your only friend. Also, you have been crying. Anyone with half an eye can see that. I have put two and two together, and I can make a good guess as to what has happened. Yesterday afternoon, you were radiantly happy. It seemed as if you expected to go somewhere with somebody. At dinner you were preoccupied. Things had evidently not come out as you expected. Edward was here last night but five minutes. When he went, you did not even bid each other goodbye. Amy, you and he have had a quarrel."

Amy tried to laugh again; but there was a

curious little catch in her voice.

"Nonsense, you dear good old uncle!" she exclaimed. "You are imagining all sorts of things."

"Amy," demanded he, severely, "where is your engagement ring? You had it at dinner

last night. Where is it now?"

The girl hung her head and dabbed at her eves with a tiny handkerchief.

"Do you care to tell me?" asked he, very

gently. "What is it all about?"

"Oh, Uncle William," sobbed she, "I can't,

I can't."

"Very well, child. I will not urge you. Nevertheless, be of good cheer. I have a conviction that things will come out all right."

He squeezed her hand and patted her upon

the shoulder.

"I have a feeling that tomorrow will see a wonderful difference in the state of affairs. That young man is a good young man. I could see that at once. Where the man is good, and the girl an angel, there can be no permanent

disagreement."

After Uncle William had left her, Amy felt a vague sort of consolation. Things did not look nearly as dark as before she had talked with him. She thought that after all there might be something left in life. There was something soothing and hopeful about Uncle William, some indescribable quality which made itself felt for good in the inmost recess of her heart.

That morning, Uncle William went down town again, and, upon his return, visited the drug store of Edward Snow. That young man was standing behind his prescription desk, he was pale and listless, and it seemed as if he had

passed a sleepless night.

"Good morning, Edward," said Uncle

William.

It did not seem strange to the young man that he should be addressed by his first name. Old age usually has its privileges, and besides, Uncle William was somehow different from the rest. One seemed to feel, at the very first, that one must have known him a long time.

"There is trouble up at our house," continued the old gentleman. "One member of our family is in a bad way."

"I am very, very sorry to hear it. What is it?

Is there anything that I can do?"

"Yes, you can do a great deal. That is the

reason I came to you."

"Then someone must be sick. Which one of the family is it, and what is the malady?"

"I am sorry to say that it is heart trouble." "That is most serious. Have you called a

physician?"

"No, not yet. I want you to fill a prescription."

"But that is irregular. You must first get

a physician. You should get one at once."

"In this case I am the physician. I am thoroughly conversant with these cases.

medical man is not necessary."

"That is a very foolish thing to say. I must insist that you get a doctor at once. You haven't told me yet who the person is?"

"It is Amy."

"Amy!" exclaimed the young man, distractedly. "Why didn't you say so before? I shall telephone a doctor at once."

"Wait, until you have heard my pre-

scription."

"What is it?" asked Edward, impatiently. "The prescription is that you come up and

see Amy to-night."

From the expression upon the young man's

face, it might be seen that a sudden light had come to him.

"Oh," he exclaimed. "I would love to do it, more than anything in the world; but I can't,

I can't."

"Nonsense! it will be the easiest and most natural thing in the world. The poor girl, as I said before, has heart trouble. In the face of it, can you refuse to see her?"

"But she told me last night that she never

wished to see me again."

"What of that? Young ladies, nine times out of ten, say what they do not mean. Now, Edward, I would like to set this matter straight. What a foolish, senseless thing it is for you two young people to part, when you love each other so much! There can be no just reason for it. Am I not right, when I say that there is no just and adequate reason for it?"

"Yes, at the bottom there is really no reason

for it."

"I knew that I was right. Now, Edward, do you wish to tell me the whole story? You need not, unless you wish. If you tell me anything, it shall go no farther, without your permission."

"I do not know why I should not tell you. The fact is, besides, that there is a strange something about you which makes me wish to confide in you. Yesterday afternoon, Amy and I had arranged to go to the matinee, at half past two. When it lacked but a little of the hour,

an unlooked for matter of business of a family nature, came up, which made it impossible for me to keep the engagement. I, therefore, wrote a note to Amy, and told her that I couldn't go. Now it seems that, the night before, when I was calling upon her, I had left upon the library table a copy book, or memorandum book, which was filled with prescriptions, such prescriptions as one comes across here and there, and which may not be found in books. After my messenger had come and gone, Amy chanced to remember the book, and thinking that I might be put to inconvenience for the want of it, she determined to bring it to me herself. When she came to my store, she found only the boy, who told her that I had gone home but a minute or two before. Deciding then to follow and overtake me, before I reached my house, she hurried up Sixth Avenue to Forty-third Street, which is the street where I live. When she turned the corner, she perceived me, a hundred yards or so ahead of her. I had with me a handsome young woman who carried a baby. Presently, I took the baby and carried it myself. Meanwhile, Amy was following us. When we came to my boarding house, the young woman and I went up the steps and passed in. Amy then went home. I am certain of all this, partly from what I know myself, partly from what the boy told me, and partly from what I learned of Amy. When I saw Amy last night, she received me in a cold and ungracious manner, she even refused to let me kiss her.

told me what she had seen, and asked me who the young woman was. I was ashamed to tell her. I would rather have told anyone else than Amy. I did not wish her, of all beings, to know of the dishonor of my family. I assured her that I was blameless in every way; but she became, every moment, more pressing and persistent. Finally, she took off her ring and gave it to me, saying, at the same time, that she never wished to see me again. Then she went to the front door and let me out and I came away."

"Edward," said Uncle William, gently, "I believe you when you say that you are blameless in every way. You need not tell me, unless you

wish, who the young woman was."

"But I will tell you. Somehow it seems good for me to tell you. She is my brother Dick's wife. Rather, she ought to be his wife. You know what I mean."

Edward Snow blushed like a girl as he said this. "I am sorry to say," continued he, "that my brother Dick is not what he should be. He drinks, and he has gone away, and left her destitute. I wrote her, sent her money, and asked her to come here. My landlady is a good woman, and has known me for years. I told her the whole story, and she consented to take Lucy in, as the wife of my brother. The poor child wants to do something for her living, and, because I think it would be best for her, I have been thinking that she might help at the soda fountain in my shop."

"Edward," exclaimed Uncle William, "you are a man after my own heart. I cannot allow Amy to lose such a husband. You will go and see her to-night, of course?"

"Do you really think I might?"

"Certainly, she will expect you. I will attend to that."

"You surely will not tell her about Lucy?"

asked the young man, apprehensively.

"I will tell her nothing besides the fact that you are a very good young man, and that every-

thing is as it should be."

That night, Edward Snow came to see Amy. He remained a very long time. When he went, Uncle William had been abed about two hours or more. In the morning, Amy came down stairs radiantly happy. She met Uncle William in the hallway, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"You dear, kind Uncle William," she cried. "You have made me the happiest girl alive. What would I have become, had it not been for you?"

"Nonsense! I could have done nothing if

Edward had not been the man he is."

"He told me everything," said the girl softly.

"I knew he would."

"I did not want him to tell me. It was not necessary. I told him so. When he was telling me, I saw how badly he felt about it. It made me cry, and I loved him all the more."

## CHAPTER VIII

### BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

It was Saturday afternoon, and Morris Rosenfeld was sitting in the library, smoking and reading the newspaper. The city offices closed at twelve o'clock, noon, upon Saturdays, and this was his usual way of spending the half holiday. Presently, Uncle William came into the room. Morris yawned and flung down his paper. Time hung heavily upon his hands. He wanted to talk with someone, and Uncle William was better than no audience at all.

"Uncle William," said he, "to-day is the best day of my life. This morning I got what I have been looking for for a long, long time. Look at me! Do I seem like a happy man, yes?"

"You certainly have a most cheerful air, Morris. I hope, with all my heart, that your happiness is real, and that it will be lasting."

"And what for should it not be? To-day, and from now on, I get my revenge on a man what I hate like I hate the devil himself."

"The spirit of revenge and hate," said Uncle William, gently, "will bring no true happiness. It is neither moral, lovely or satisfactory. You will surely hurt yourself more than you hurt your enemy."

"That is all very well when you put up a talk; but there is nothing so good as when you succeed to get even with a fellow, who has sometime put it all over you. Listen, Uncle William, and I will tell you what there is to the business."

"I am listening."

"There's an old Irishman, named Martin Guilfoyle, who lives over in the Sixth Assembly District, the place I came from, before I came here. He's a contractor and has some money. Now this old fellow, he always hated me, and whenever he could to do it, he did me hurt, both in and out of politics. Then he ends it up, about four years ago, by cheating me out of three hundred and fifty dollars. It was an old trick, and I should to have kept my eyes open; but I didn't. He puts an advertisement in a newspaper, which he knew I read every night, like this: "Will pay fifty cents on the dollar for stock of the Hoboken Light and Fuel Gas Company. Harris & Co., 56 Broadway, New York."

"Now he knows that I know that he has some of those Gas Stock shares already, and that's what for he put the advertisement in the papers. I go around to him like a lamb what wants to be sheared, and I says to him, sort of casual and offhand like: 'Martin,' says I, 'didn't you say, one time, that you had some of that Hoboken

Light and Fuel Gas Stock?'

"Yes," says he, "and I got it yet."

"What's it worth?" says I.

"I don't know," says he. "They have been making money lately. I guess it's worth somewhere around thirty."

"Then it must have taken a awful jump,"

says I. "Since a year, it was selling around

five cents."

"That may be," says he, "but I wouldn't sell mine at less than twenty-five. They been making a lot of money."

"How many shares you got?" says I.

"Twenty," says he.

"I'll give you ten cents on the dollar for the lot," says I. "I know a fellow what has eighty shares, and he wants to even it to a hundred."

"Never, on your life," says he.

"Well, we talked it for an hour or more, I making believe, all the time, as I didn't care much about it anyhow, and finally, I bought the twenty shares at seventeen and a half cents, which made them come to three hundred and fifty dollars. I pay the old man the money, then I took the certificate down to 56 Broadway, laughing to myself like anything, all the way down town, thinking how I got the best of that old Irishman. When I gets down there, there wasn't any Harris & Co., and there never had been any Harris & Co. Then I saw mighty quick as I had been skinned alive by that old rascal, and the skin nailed to a post.

"I went back and saw old Guilfoyle, pretty quick, you bet, and asked him to give my money back; but he only laughed me in the face, and what you think he says? Just this: "When a Irishman beats a Jew, he does the work of God." Then I went to a lawyer, and he says it was no use to do anything; because I couldn't prove that

old Guilfoyle put the advertisement in the paper. That was four years ago, and every time I see that old thief, he grins at me; so that I want to

push him the face in."

"But all the time, I says to myself: "Just wait, and I wait and I waited. About six months ago, I get onto something, which made me to think that I get me even with him. Old Guilfoyle has a son, named Tony, what is a sort of sport, a gambler and a souse. He gets himself into all kinds of scrapes, and it costs his father a lot of money to get him out of 'em. Well, I fixes it up with a fellow, named Silverman, who is a friend of mine, and who knows Tony, to lend him five, ten, twenty dollars; so that Tony thinks that Silverman is dead easy. Pretty soon, Tony comes to him, and wants to borrow four hundred dollars.

"If I don't get it," says he, "it's all up with me, and I'm a goner."

"What you think I am?" says Silverman. "I got no four hundred dollars, and if I had, I'd be all sorts of a fool, to lend it to you, without that you gave me security."

"What security do you want?" says Tony. "Get your father's name on the note," says Silverman, "and I'll try to get you the money."

"What sort of a line of talk you giving me?" says Tony. "You know my father, and you know how that would be harder to get him on that note than the president of the United States."

"I'll tell you what to do," says Silverman. "You get Morris Rosenfeld on the note, and I'll get the money. Morris is an easy mark, and I know he'll do it."

Well, Tony goes away, and comes back next day with his note for four hundred dollars, and my name on the back of it, which, of course, I never signed, and Silverman let him have the money."

"Day before yesterday that note came due, and was protested. I got the notice of protest yesterday morning, paid the note, right off, quick, and wrote Martin Guilfoyle a letter, like

this:

"I had to take up a note this morning, at the East River National Bank, for four hundred dollars, made by your son, Tony, with my name on the back of it, which I never wrote. What

you going to do about it?"

When I got to my office this morning, at ten o'clock, old Guilfoyle was there, waiting for me. He'd been there a half an hour already, the sweat was pouring down his face, and he looked like as if he'd run all the way from Thirty-fourth Street.

"I've come," says he, sort of genial like,

"to take up that note."

"No, you're not," says I.
"What do you mean?" says he.

"I mean this:" says I, "four years ago, you swindled me out of three hundred and fifty dollars. When I complained about it, you said

that a Irishman who could beat a Jew, does the work of God. Now it's my turn to do the work of God. Your son has forged my name, and I'm going to have him sent over the road for it."

"Morris," says he, and he tried to force a laugh out of his throat, "that was all a joke. I meant all the time to pay you back. I'll take up the note, and I'll pay you the three hundred and fifty dollars with interest to date."

"You will not," says I.

Then he began to offer me more money, one, two, three, four, five hundred dollars.

"It's no use," says I, "I wouldn't make to

let you off for ten thousand dollars."

"The old man then went all to pieces. He got down on his knees, he wept and he wrung his hands. To get rid of him, I got up and left him. Never have I had such a good time, since I was born."

"It seems to me," said Uncle William, calmly and judicially, "that you are equally culpable with Martin Guilfoyle and his son. When he cheated you, you were trying to cheat him. You thought that you were buying his stock at less than it was worth. You thought that you were getting the better of him on account of his ignorance of its value. It seems to me that you were no better than he. You also were very reprehensible in setting a trap for the young man! Had you not set the trap, he would not have forged your name. You and your friend Silverman entered into a conspiracy, by means of which, young Guilfoyle was led to commit a crime. I think, though I am not sure, that the penalty for such a conspiracy is as heavy as that for the forgery itself."

"That may all be; but, when you fight the devil, you have to use it the devil's weapons."

"Not necessarily. There are other weapons which are better. I am firmly of the opinion, taking into consideration the fact that you are equally to blame with the Guilfoyles, that your just, kind and honorable course is to take what money is rightfully yours, and let the boy go."

"That would be to laugh. How then would

I get it my revenge?"

"You have already had your revenge."
"How have I had it?"

"You had it when you refused the old man's offer this morning. At that time, he reached the limit of his suffering. A man sorrows most in the anticipation of his misfortune. If you press the matter to the end, and put his son in prison, you will do a thing for which he has already fully suffered. His feelings will become dulled and unresponsive, and he will be more or less resigned to the calamity. Furthermore, you will not enjoy this revenge as you think you will. It will pall upon you, and become wormwood in your mouth. It will react upon you. It will degrade you and sear your soul."

"Am I a fool then, that I should throw away

my revenge?"

"As I said before, you have already had it. It is a misfortune for you; but what is done cannot be helped. Is this man, Martin Guilfoyle, a Christian?"

"I suppose so. He goes to Mass every

Sunday."

"Do you think that the Jews, as a people, are as good and religious as the Christians?"

"What for should I not think so? Sure they

are?"

"Would you like to show the world, not only, that the Jews are as good as the Christians; but that some Jews are better than some Christians?

"Sure I would. It is only the truth; but how

would I make to prove it?"

"By taking from Martin Guilfoyle only the amount of your note, and the three hundred and fifty dollars, with interest to the present day, and by letting his son go. In doing this, you will truly get your revenge. Religion teaches us that the sweetest revenge is in doing good to those who have done us an injury."

"That seems to me to be a foolish thing.

There is nothing like that in our religion."

"There is, but you have not found it. In the New Testament, the book of the Christians, you will find such principles more clearly stated. Have you ever read the New Testament?"

"I have not; but I will read it some day. I am not a fool, that I am afraid it would change

my religion."

"You may read it with profit, even though

it does not change your religion. In the New Testament it says also: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,' which means that a man who is merciful to his fellow men will receive mercy from God at the last day. Again it says: 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' These are some of the cardinal principles of the Christian religion, and though, as I said before, they are not so expressly stated in your bible, nevertheless, they are there; so that a Jew may not be a conscientious believer unless he is merciful and forgiving. I have shown you, Morris, that you have been equally culpable with the Guilfoyles. I have shown you that you have already had your revenge, and that to press your advantage further will bring you disappointment and degradation. I have spoken to you of some of the maxims of the Christian and Jewish religions. You must acknowledge that these maxims are just and true and beautiful. By them you are commanded to be merciful, and to forgive your enemies."

"What do you say, Morris? Will you do with these Guilfoyles, father and son, as I have

asked you?"

"I will think about it."

"Will you promise to think about it, earnestly and attentively?"

"Sure I will. Say, Uncle William, I think

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that I am getting to like you a lot. If all Christians were like you, I should begin to believe that there was some truth after all in the Christian religion."

### CHAPTER IX

### THOMAS CARSON'S SPECULATION

Sunday morning, Uncle William, Amy and the two children went to a small church which stood upon a cross street, a few blocks to the north of the Carson house. After the services were finished, they walked up to Central Park. Here, Amy and the children sat upon a bench, while Uncle William, who had brought some crusts of bread in his pockets, fed the birds and squirrels. Within a few moments after he had strewn some crumbs upon the ground, a large concourse of small creatures had gathered about him. His audience consisted of four doves, two squirrels and half a hundred sparrows. Finally these small pensioners became so tame, that the squirrels ran up his clothing and perched upon his arms, and the birds circled about and took the crumbs from his fingers. At the last, he alternately fed a dove which clung upon his shoulder, a sparrow which sat upon his thumb, and another which stood upon the top of his head. He was like the bird charmers which one sees in the public gardens of Paris and London.

"This," said he, to Dot and Max, "is what you can do with these little friends of ours, if you are kind to them and get their confidence."

After luncheon, that day, Uncle William

took Mrs. Sarah Carson apart.

"My dear Sarah," said he, "I have some important news. I have gone into business. I commence tomorrow morning. It is a profitable venture. I thought that you would like to know it."

The look upon Mrs. Carson's face gave evidence of her pleasure. She made a mental calculation of the profit which would accrue from Uncle William's ten dollars, and the result

seemed to be most satisfactory.

"I am very glad to hear it, William," said she. "At the same time, I can't see for the life of me, how you managed to get hold of something in such short time. I doubted very much that you would be able to find anything. What is the business? I am of course most anxious to know."

"That, Sarah dear, must remain a secret, at least for the present. Several weighty reasons prevent me from telling you about it just now. In due course of time, however, you shall know all. There is a peculiarity about this business which may seem strange to you at first. My working hours are from two until eight in the morning. I shall leave the house at one o'clock and will return at nine. I hope that this will not incommode you."

"Why, William, what do you mean? What sort of a business is it which requires you to keep such hours? It does not seem to me that

it can be respectable. What will the neighbors say to see you going out at one o'clock in the morning and coming back at nine? They will

take you for a burglar, at least."

"It will not be often that they will see me go. Folks are not usually up and about at one o'clock. If they see me coming back at nine, they will think that I have been out for a walk. As for the respectability of my business, let me assure you, Sarah dear, that it is one of the most honorable and useful callings which exist."

"I suppose that I must take your word for it," said Mrs. Carson, doubtingly. "What is the reason, though, that I must be kept in the dark? What will the rest of the family say

about it?"

"All in good time, Sarah. All in good time. As I said before, my calling is a most decent and respectable one. When you know about it, as you will very shortly, you will acknowledge that fact."

Upon parting with Uncle William, Mrs. Carson did not show by the expression of her face that she was very well satisfied with the

quality of this business.

All the evening before and all that day, Thomas Carson had been going around with a very important air. He looked as if he had a matter of great weight upon his mind and as if he longed to unburden himself. Late in the afternoon, finding Uncle William in the front parlor, he proceeded to do so.

"Uncle William," said he, "you see before you a man who has just made a most successful venture. I am about ten thousand dollars better off than I was a few days ago. I saw the chance and I took it. Some people think that I am slow and unenterprising. That is because I have never had an opportunity. The opportunity came and I took advantage of it at once."

"I am delighted, Thomas, to hear of your good fortune. Do you care to tell me how it

came about?"

"I will tell you; but it must go no further at present. If news of it got out prematurely it might spoil all. As you perhaps know, I am a bookkeeper in the offices of the Manhattan Biscuit Company. This company, in times past, has made a great deal of money, and, up to a period, about seven years ago, paid regular dividends of eight per cent a year. This made the stock worth well above par; so that it was considered a very good investment. About seven years ago the Company began to have trouble. Several lawsuits went against it, an officer of the Company ran away with a hundred thousand dollars of its funds, and several of its large customers failed. For these reasons, the dividends were suspended, and the Company hasn't paid a cent for seven years. During the last year or two, however, things have been looking up, the company has accumulated a large surplus, and dividends are about to be resumed. At the last meeting of the directors, a resolution was passed, declaring a quarterly dividend of two per cent, which will be paid upon the first of the month. This puts the stock again upon an eight per cent basis, and makes it again worth par. This, however, is a secret, and no one, outside of the directors, knows about it, with the exception of myself. I happened to be in a telephone booth, next the board room, at the time of the meeting, and I heard the

directors pass the resolution.'

"Now there is an old fellow, named Appleyard, who owns a hundred shares of the stock. He has had it for the last twelve or fifteen years, and I think, in fact, I am certain, that he has no property besides. At the time he bought it, it was thought to be a splendid investment, and he took the savings of a lifetime, and bought the hundred shares. The old man has no relatives whatever, and, having only himself to support, he lived in great comfort and ease, as long as the company paid him the eight hundred dollars a year. You can imagine what happened to the old chap when the company stopped payment. I suppose it must have been like the end of the world. I don't know how he has managed to exist since then. I think, though, that he makes furnace fires and cleans off sidewalks. That's quite a come down; because, really, he was quite intelligent and well educated."

"Now the funny part of it is this. Every quarter day he comes around to the office, to ask if there isn't any dividend. He has got to be sort of childish about it. He hasn't missed a quarter day since the company stopped paying dividends. First, he used to insist on seeing the president or the secretary. For the last four or five years, though, they have pretended they were out, and have shunted him off on me."

"He must be seventy-five years old by this time. He's a comical-looking old codger, believe me. Long and slim, with a white beard like a goat, funny little eyes like a fish, and a yellow shriveled neck, like a turkey's. He shakes all over, as if he had the palsy, and his nose and chin work up and down, like a rabbit's when he talks to you. The boys in the office play all sorts of jokes on him, steal his hat, or his handkerchief, and pin papers on his back. He doesn't seem to mind it though. 'Boys will be boys' is

all they can get out of him."
"Thomas," said Uncle William, gently, "you tell this story as if there were something humorous and comical about it. You seem to think the whole thing vastly amusing. To my mind, it is all extremely pathetic. Your description of the old man awakens nothing but

compassion in my heart."

"That may be, Uncle. I suppose that it would strike different people differently. Well, to get on with what I was going to say. When I overheard the directors pass that resolution, I immediately thought of old Appleyard and his hundred shares of stock. 'Here,' said I to myself, 'is where I make a lot of money. I can easily buy the old man's stock for a few hundred dollars. He hasn't had a cent out of it for years, and will be only too glad to realize something upon it.' I at once sent for him, and he came trotting down to the office in a great state of excitement. He evidently thought that the long deferred dividend had been declared. I talked with him for some time, spoke of the great losses which the company had sustained, at one time and another, showed him how unlikely it was that the company would ever pay a dividend, and offered him five hundred dollars for his stock. It is almost unnecessary to say that he accepted my offer at once. He is going to bring the certificate of stock to me to-morrow, and I am going to pay him the money. What do you think of that for a transaction? If I keep the stock until the dividend is paid, I will have, including the dividend, ten thousand, two hundred dollars, a profit of ninety-seven hundred dollars. It seems almost too good to be true. Sometimes I think that I will keep the stock, instead of selling it. That will make me a person of importance in the company. It may even be that they will make me, in time, a director."

"Thomas," said Uncle William, "I do not think that I have heard you correctly. I think that I have misunderstood what you have just

been saying. Kindly go over it again."

Thomas Carson again told of the thought which had come to him, as he was listening to

the transactions of the directors' meeting, and how he had bought old Appleyard's stock for five hundred dollars.

"The reason," said Uncle William, "why I asked you to tell me the story over again, was that I scarcely could bring myself to believe that you proposed to do this thing. The affair resolves itself into this: This old man is feeble and sick. I think you said that he shook, as if he had the palsy. It is bad enough to be old and sick and feeble. It is a thousand times worse to be also poor. The old man has a property which, commencing with the first of the month, will bring him in an income of eight hundred dollars a year. Upon this income he can live with comfort and with ease. You propose to deprive him of this property. The result is easily foreseen. He is too old to work, he will have to beg. He will die upon the streets or in the hospital. This will be your work."

"Now there is no use, Uncle William, in putting the proposition in such a harsh way. I offered him the money, and he took it. It was a fair, business-like transaction. Besides, you must remember that I have to look out for

my own family."

"Your family will never prosper by the use of the money which you have taken from this poor old man. Let us suppose that you should find Mr. Appleyard asleep by the side of the highway, upon a dark night. Let us also suppose that he has a pocket book, which con-

tains ten thousand dollars. Would you take it away from him?"

"Certainly not. That would be highway

robbery."

"When you buy his stock for five hundred dollars, it is also highway robbery. I have endeavored to prevent you from doing this thing by exciting your compassion. I will now show you that you would be committing a crime, not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of man. You are an officer of the company. The directors were elected by the stockholders, and you were appointed by the directors. Consequently you were appointed by the stockholders. You were put into your present position, that you might work for the stockholders and guard their interests. That was the agreement which you tacitly made when you took the position. Instead of guarding the interests of the stockholder Appleyard, you are using your position to ruin him. You are using the knowledge which your position gives you to buy his property for a tithe of what it is worth. You are betraying your trust. Heavens, man! Do you not see that this project of yours is impossible?"
"I suppose it is," answered Thomas, with a

"I suppose it is," answered Thomas, with a long-drawn-out sigh. "It is a mighty hard thing to give it up though. To tell the truth, I have had some qualms of conscience about it, now and then. You have put the affair before me in a new way, and I see now, that, being an officer of the company, I couldn't very well buy

his stock. I will tell him, however, that I have found out, since talking with him, that the directors have declared a dividend, and that the trade is off."

"That will not do either, Thomas. Tell him the truth. Tell him that you knew about the dividend all the time; but that you have since been talking with a friend and thinking the matter over, and that you do not wish to rob him."

"I will tell him that, Uncle William. The next time that I am in doubt, I am coming to you. There is something about you which inspires one to better thoughts. Uncle William, I want to shake hands with you."

## CHAPTER X

### SAINTS' REST

Uncle William left the house at one o'clock Monday morning and returned at nine. After changing his clothing, he came down to the dining-room. The meal was long since over; but Amy had kept his breakfast warm and now gave him her company while he ate.

"Amy," said he, "you are the only one who

has not asked me what my business was."

"I have not asked you, Uncle William, because I thought you would tell me if you wished me to know."

"Amy, you are a pearl among women. The rest of them are dying to know. A certain young man will get a prize when he marries you. Have you not thought it strange, though, that I should take the hours from one until nine in the morning?"

"The hours may seem unusual, Uncle. Whatever your business may be, however, I know that it must be something fine and honest

and worthy."

"And so it is, Amy. There is nothing more

useful and honorable."

On Tuesday morning, Uncle William and Amy sat again in the dining-room. Presently, Thomas Carson, who had made himself ready for the street, came to the doorway and looked

in upon them.

"Good morning, Uncle William," said he, "I see that you are back from your business." I wish you success with it, whatever it is. I wanted to tell you about old Appleyard. I sent for him yesterday and told him exactly what we had agreed upon. I was never so glad of anything in my life. I see now that I would have made a great mistake. You should have seen the old man when I told him. It was pitiful. It upset me. I haven't got over it yet."

Thomas Carson turned away and seemed to

have much difficulty in repressing his feelings. "Thomas," said Uncle William, impressively. "I congratulate you. This is something which you will always remember with pleasure. I have a curious feeling about this matter. I think that this is not the end of it. You have set in motion a train of circumstances which will bring you contentment and happiness."

As Thomas Carson left the room, Morris

Rosenfeld came in.

"Hullo, Uncle William!" cried he. "I see that you are back again. Hope that you are making a go of it. I don't know what you are doing; but I'll bet it's all right, all right. I wanted to tell you about Guilfoyle. I did just as you said. Say, did I make a mistake? Well, I guess not. If I had done as I wanted to at first, I'd have been all kinds of a blamed fool. Say, Uncle William, you ought to have seen Martin Guilfoyle when I told him I'd let up on him. He went all to pieces, got hold of my hand and wouldn't let go. It upset me, kind of turned me upside down. What do you think he said?" Says he: "The best man I ever met in my life is a Jew, and you're it." And says he: "I'm your friend for life, and whatever you want in the sixth district, I'll see you get it."

want in the sixth district, I'll see you get it."

"Morris," said Uncle William, heartily, "I congratulate you. I am glad to join with you in your satisfaction. I see that you are very happy over the matter. Well, you should be. You have done a good action, you have caused your religion to be respected, by showing that a Jew may be a just and merciful man, and you

have gained a good friend."

When Uncle William went up stairs, at about ten o'clock, he heard a sound of voices coming from George's room, which was the large front room upon the fourth floor. It was unusual for George to be in his chamber at that hour. He should have been at the bank. George was talking loudly and desperately. Then there was a woman's voice too. She was uttering sorrowful exclamations, complaining and sobbing. Presently the door opened and Mrs. Sarah Carson came from the room. She had her handkerchief to her eyes, and was convulsed with grief. Uncle William met her upon the landing and took her hand.

"What is the matter, Sarah?" asked he. "I can't tell you. It is too terrible."

"But I can help you. You must tell me." "You can't help me. It is a matter of money."

"Even so, I can help you."

A momentary look of hope came into Mrs. Carson's face. Perhaps this old man had re-

sources that she knew not of.

"It is too frightful," said she, chokingly. "I don't see how I can tell you. It is very hard for me to do so. It is the bank. There is something the matter with George's accounts at the bank."

"George has been taking money from the bank?"

"Yes, I suppose he really has. I did not like to put it in that way. It seems so harsh and vulgar to say it in such a plain blunt manner. Oh, whatever shall I do?"

"How much money has he taken?"

"A very small amount, only about seven hundred dollars. I suppose the poor boy really meant no harm. You see, he intended to replace it. Then, too, young men have so many temptations. There are so many ways for them to spend money. Oh, William, that isn't the worst of it. If you knew how it makes my heart ache to tell you; but I must. This isn't the first time. It has happened twice before. Morris and Thomas helped him out before. I owe them both. They have my notes, Morris twelve hundred and Thomas six. There is no use in applying to them again. Thomas has absolutely nothing, and Morris declared, the last time, that he

would never pay another cent. He said that, if it happened again, he would leave the house."

"Sarah," said Uncle William, gently, but firmly, "I can help you out of this trouble, and I will help you. But it must be in my own way."

"Oh, William, if you really would. I don't

care how you do it, if you only do it."

"Let us go in and see the young man."

When they entered the room, they found George sitting in a large easy chair with his head in his hands. He looked up and scowled. He saw that his mother had acquainted Uncle William with the business, and he resented it.

"What is he doing here?" he demanded,

roughly. "What did you tell him for?"

"Your Uncle William says that he can help

us, George. That is why he is here."

"How can he do anything? He hasn't a copper himself. What was the sense of bring-

ing him into this?"

"I told your mother," said Uncle William, patiently, "that I could help you out of this trouble, and that I would do so if I could do it in my own way. In the first place, how much money have you stolen from the bank?"

"What do you mean by talking to me in that way?" demanded George, "I don't want you or anyone else to use such words to me."

"Oh, William," pleaded Mrs. Carson, "do not use such harsh language to the boy. He doesn't deserve it. You must make some allowance for him,"

"I said 'stolen,' said Uncle William, firmly, "and I repeat it. When I help him out of this affair, I make certain conditions. One of them is that he shall repent of his crime and take a solemn oath never to repeat it. His sensitiveness at having his misdeeds called by their right names does not look well. It does not look as if he realized the enormity of his transgression. How can he repent, unless he fully realizes what he has done? I repeat my question. How much money have you stolen from the bank?"

"Seven hundred dollars," answered George

sullenly.

"When will your defalcation be discovered? How long time have you in which to make it up?"

"It would be all right if I could replace it

by to-morrow afternoon."

"What did you do with the money?"

"What has that to do with it? What differ-

ence does it make?"

"It makes this difference. If I am to pay for you, you must tell me the truth, and answer without quibbling. What did you do with the money?"

"If you must know, I bet it on the wrong

horses."

Fire blazed from Uncle William's eyes.

"In other words," said he, sententiously and severely, "you stole in order to gamble. You did not need the money for any legitimate purpose. You took it to satisfy your evil desires.

This is the third or fourth time you have done this, and it should show me that you are incorrigible. Twice or thrice your brother and your uncle, both of whom you look down upon and ridicule, have saved you from arrest. You are a wicked and miserable wretch. You have done your best to bring shame and disgrace upon your mother and sister. You deserve no mercy. Your proper place is in State's prison. I have promised your mother, though, to help you out of this trouble, and I will do so. First, however, you will swear upon the Bible, never again to steal, gamble or drink. Sarah, will you fetch me a Bible?"

Mrs. Carson went out of the room and returned, after a moment or two, with a Bible. Uncle William took it and handed it to George.

"Put your hand upon it," commanded Uncle William, and repeat my words. "I swear, never again, so long as I live, to steal, gamble or drink."

George repeated his words in a dogged and sullen manner.

"Now," said Uncle William, "kiss the book." George made a pretence of doing so. Uncle William arose and went to leave the room.

"I am going to get the money," said he, "I will be gone an hour. Wait for me here."

Uncle William went into his own room and picked up his two well beloved books. He looked at them fondly and lingeringly. After a while he put the Pilgrim's Progress in his

pocket and laid the Saints' Rest upon the wash stand. He stood a moment, undecided, then he drew the one book from his pocket, and replaced it with the other. He now went down stairs and left the house. He went over to Fifth Avenue and walked down Fifth Avenue, until near Twenty-third Street. Here he found and entered a second-hand book store, one of those stores where they buy and sell rare and valuable books. When he came out, a half hour later, he had left his small volume with the proprietor of the store, and he had in his pocket book seven hundred dollars in crisp new bank bills of large denominations.

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Carson to Uncle William, after he had given George the money, and after George had gone down town, "that you were altogether too hard and severe upon George. You must recollect that he is really nothing but a boy. My heart bled for him while you were talking to him. And William, there is something I wish to speak to you about. I can't bear to have you sitting at the small table by the wall. I am going to make arrangements at dinner, so that you can have your former place by Amy."

## CHAPTER XI

#### PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

George Percival did not return to the house that noon, and Uncle William sat in George's seat at the table, and was next to Amy. Thomas Carson also remained down town, and Victor Thorne, becoming aware of the fact, perhaps through telepathy, came to take luncheon with his mother. As before, Dot took her father's place, and Victor sat between his mother and Lily Smith Carson.

"When Papa's away," remarked Dot, "I allus sit in Papa's place and Victor sits in my place. Wy don't Mama sit in papa's place?

Then I c'ud sit in Mama's place?"

Lily Smith Carson colored and repressed her offspring with a threatening frown and a whispered word of command.

"Victor is not used to little girls," said Dot's grandmother. "We have you sit here so that

you will not annoy him."

"Is Victor used to big girls?" asked Dot.

When the meal was over, Victor went down town. A half an hour afterward, Lily Smith Carson also left the house. She walked over to Sixth Avenue, took the elevated train and got off at the Thirty-fourth Street station. At the foot of the stairway, she was met by Victor, and

the two crossed over to the Herald Square Theatre which, at the time, was showing moving pictures. The semi-obscurity of a moving picture theatre covers a multitude of sins. As Victor was buying the tickets, Uncle William, appearing suddenly from nowhere in particular, came up to them.

"This is a happy chance," said he, "I am certainly very fortunate in coming across you. I have long been devoted to these entertainments. In the rough places of the west, you know, it is all the theatre we have. I am glad to see that you also are patrons of the moving pictures. I shall enjoy them much more by reason of your

company."

Victor and Lily did not seem to be enthusiastic in their welcome of Uncle William. When they were seated in the theatre, Lily Smith Carson was in the middle, with Victor

and Uncle William upon either side.

"It seems to me," remarked Uncle William, during an interval between the scenes, "that these moving picture dramas are doing an immense amount of good. They are educating the people, and particularly that class of the people which most needs it. The invention is still in its infancy and there is no telling to what great heights of perfection it may grow. The question is: Shall it be used for good or evil? Shall these pictures be educational and elevating, or shall they be unprofitable and debasing? I would be in favor of using them in the churches

and in the schools. Music has for ages been part of the church service. Why not pictures? What could be more interesting than to see depicted the acts of the apostles, or the parables of our Lord? Make moving pictures of the incidents of the Bible a part of the service, and women would no longer go to church solely for the purpose of showing their clothing, or looking at the clothing of other women. Men would no longer go to church solely because their wives made them, or because it helped them in business. I would also give half or three quarters of an hour of every school day to moving pictures. In this way, history, geography and morals might be taught to the best advantage. Education, to the child, would be a delight, instead of a vexation, and the boy would no longer be 'creeping like snail unwillingly to school'."

Victor Thorne took out his watch and looked

at the time.

"I have just thought of an important engagement," said he. "I had forgotten it entirely. I must leave at once. Lily, you will pardon me, will you not? I really must go."

He shook hands with Lily, and left the theatre, without looking at Uncle William.

"I think," said Lily, after a few moments, "that I will go too. I have some shopping to do. It is really important, and I can't neglect it."

Saying this, she arose and left the theatre.

Uncle William sat on alone.

George Percival did not come home to dinner. Neither did he appear during the evening. It was eight o'clock, and Uncle William was going to bed. He went to bed now at eight instead of nine. As he was passing along the hallway of the second floor, he was met by Mrs. Carson, the elder.

"William," said she, "George has not been home since morning. What do you think is the reason? I am afraid that something has happened to him. Usually I do not worry when he stays away; but now'I am anxious. He had all

that money with him, you know."

"I must say, Sarah, that I am anxious, too." "Then you also think that something may have happened to him."

"No, Sarah. I am anxious about the money."

"You think that he may have lost it?"

"It depends upon what you mean by the word lost."

George did not come home that night. At nine o'clock, the next morning, just after Uncle William had returned from his business, a taxicab was driven to the door. The driver and another man who sat with him opened the cab door and pulled from the cab something which resembled a dilapidated George Percival Carson. At Uncle William's direction, the young man was taken to his room upon the fourth floor and put to bed. After Uncle William had settled with the driver and the men had left, he went into the boy's room, where he found Mrs.

Carson.

"The poor boy!" sighed his mother. "It must have been such a great relief to him when he settled with the bank that he went and made a night of it."

"Are you sure," asked Uncle William, "that

he settled with the bank?"

"Why, of course. That would be his first move. What else would he do with the money?"

"There are several other things which he might do with it. If you look in the pockets of his coat and vest, you may find out what he has done with it."

George's clothing hung upon the back of a

chair.

Mrs. Carson felt in the pockets, and drew forth a number of three inch squares of paper. Upon each of these squares was written a word. Under the words were figures. Uncle William picked up one of the tickets and read aloud.

"Firefly, to win," read he, "twenty-five

dollars."

He then took up and read another. "Angelina, for place, twenty dollars."

Uncle William now assembled all the tickets, shuffled them from one hand to another, and

made a computation.

"The amounts of money on these tickets," said he, "total something over six hundred dollars. It is plain that George has again been betting upon the wrong horses. In an hour or

so, he will have recovered sufficiently so that you can find out the truth from him. When you have discovered it, let me know."

"William!" cried Mrs. Carson, with a horror-stricken face. "You don't think that he has

lost the money?"

"I am afraid so, Sarah."

An hour afterward, Mrs. Carson found

Uncle William in the library.

"Oh, William!" she exclaimed. "It is true. He has lost everything. He hasn't one single penny. He has owned up. The poor boy thought that he might win back what he had lost before. What shall we do? What shall we do? The money must be in the bank this afternoon. We will all be disgraced."

"There, there, Sarah," said Uncle William, gently, patting her arm. "Do not worry. I said that I would help you out of your trouble

and I will keep my word."

"But how can you do so? It will take seven hundred dollars more, and I thought that you were absolutely without funds. William, you must be a rich man, after all."

"I am not rich; but you may trust me, never-

theless."

Uncle William went to his room and took up his small, remaining volume. He looked at it long and lovingly; then he put it in his pocket, went down the stairs and out of the house. He visited the book store upon Fifth Avenue, where he had been the day before. When he came out, his Pilgrim's Progress reposed upon the shelf, beside the Saints' Rest. When he returned to

the house, he sought out Mrs. Carson.

"Here is the money again," said he, as he handed her the roll of bills. "I wish that you would go down to the bank with George this afternoon. When you have gone into the bank with him, give him the money, and see that he puts it where it belongs."

"But that will look as if I could not trust

him."

"But can you, Sarah?"

Mrs. Carson's estimate of Uncle William's financial standing had gone up by leaps and bounds. Max had again been relegated to the small table beside the wall, and Uncle William had his old place at her right hand. She was even thinking of fixing up a room for him on the second story. Sometimes, she dreamed again of new rugs and curtains, and of a new wardrobe for herself and Amy.

Several weeks passed by. George seemed to have changed very much for the better. He no longer drank. His appearance had improved, and he kept good hours, both at the bank and

at home.

One night, Thomas Carson telephoned that he was not coming home for dinner, and that he would be kept at the office until eleven o'clock. At half past eight, while the other members of the family were playing bridge, or were otherwise engaged in the parlors, Lily Smith Carson, carrying a black traveling bag, stole softly down the stairs, and let herself out of the front door. Again she took the Sixth Avenue elevated train to Thirty-fourth Street, and again, she was met, at the foot of the stair-

way, by Victor Thorne.

They went into a nearby restaurant, and remained there for an hour. When they came out, Victor helped his companion into a taxicab, and placed the traveling bag beside her. Then he went back into the restaurant, as if he had forgotten something. At this moment, someone opened the door of the taxicab. Lily looked up and saw Uncle William. He extended his hand to her.

"Come!" said he.

He spoke in a low and gentle tone of voice; but there was a quality in his accents and a compelling force in his glance which seemed to hypnotize her. She arose, took his hand and stepped down to the walk. Uncle William picked up her traveling bag, closed the door of the cab, gave her his arm, and the two passed up the street. The driver of the cab interposed no objection. He had probably had the same kind of experience before. Coming to a hotel, Uncle William stopped.

"I will check your traveling bag here," said he. "When I come home to-morrow morning,

I will bring it with me."

When he had checked the bag, he hailed a taxicab, and they were driven homeward.

"Lily," said he, presently, "I was speaking to you, that day when we went to the moving pictures, about the moral influence which those pictures exert. I recollect that I was telling about the man who steals his neighbor's wife. How the pictures always show that it brings unhappiness to both him and her. How true this is! In the first place, he can have no respect for her, and without respect there can be no love. On both sides there can be really but a temporary infatuation, which soon turns to hatred and contempt. The woman, by her act, at once puts herself beyond the pale of society. She is separated forever from the companionship of good women. If she has left a child, she disgraces it. If the child should die, her remorse would be eternal."

When they had arrived home, and were going

up the steps, she squeezed his arm.

"I am so glad, so glad," she said chokingly. In the hallway, they were met by Mrs. Carson, the elder.

"Why, Lily," she exclaimed, "wherever have

you been?"

"We have been taking in the moving pictures," answered Uncle William.

## CHAPTER XII

## UNCLE WILLIAM'S DEPARTURE

The next morning there was joy in the Carson household. The postman, on his morning round, had brought a letter to Thomas Carson. It was typewritten upon the letterhead of Dawson & Dawson, Attorneys at Law, and read as follows:

"Thomas Grosvenor Carson, Esquire."

"Dear Sir: We regret to have to inform you of the death, upon the third of the present month, of our client, Mr. Benjamin Appleyard. We drew up Mr. Appleyard's will, and it was executed upon the 29th of last month. We are pleased to inform you that, by this will, he has made you his sole heir. Please call upon us in our office at an early date, and we will arrange for the settling of the estate and the transfer of the property.

"Very truly yours,

Dawson & Dawson."

"Lily," said Thomas Carson, at the breakfast table, after the matter of the legacy had been talked over at great length, "as soon as the estate is settled, I will get a dividend of two hundred dollars from the stock which old Appleyard has left me. I am going to give this dividend cheque to you. I have never been able to dress you as I should. You must buy a new outfit, throughout. No one deserves it better

than you."

At half past eight, on the night of the same day, Uncle William, on the way to his room, met George Percival on the landing of the third floor.

"I want to talk with you for a few moments,"

said George.

Uncle William with his hand upon the rail of the stairway which led to the fourth floor, gazed at George, with an enigmatic smile.

"This is a disagreeable thing," continued the young man, "but I've got to get it over with. Mother and I have talked about it, and we have both come to the same conclusion. She would tell you herself; but she naturally dislikes to do it."

"I am listening," said Uncle William.

"Of course, you know of the very handsome fortune which has been left to Thomas by old Appleyard. What induced him to make Thomas his heir I don't know; but that is neither here nor there."

"After all it makes no difference."

"I have also been fortunate. I have received an increase in salary from the bank of three hundred dollars a year."

"I congratulate you with all my heart."

"I mention these things to show you that the Carson family is looking up. We are no longer nobodies, we are going to take a position in the world. Thomas hopes, by next year, to become a director in his company. I also have my ambitions in regard to the bank. Ten days ago, I made the acquaintance of Lucy Adams, the cashier's daughter. I have already taken her twice to the theatre, she is a fine girl, and I can see that she is not indifferent to me. We may make a match of it. Stranger things than that have happened. Also you know that Amy is to marry Edward Snow. The date of the wedding has been fixed for October first."

"Yes, I know that."

"I have mentioned these facts simply as preliminaries. It is really on account of these things that Mother and I have come to the agreement which I spoke of. Now I come to the really important part of what I have to say. I have always thought it very strange that you should leave the house at one in the morning, and come back at nine. It has been a very extraordinary proceeding, and our suspicions have been aroused. Last night, I waited up until you left the house. Then I followed you."

"I knew that you did."

"I found out that you are a waiter in Gray's all night restaurant. Your hours are from two in the morning until eight. They have four shifts of waiters. The ones who serve from two to eight in the morning are paid the most."

"That is why I chose those hours."

"Well, do you think for a moment that the Carsons will permit a member of the family to disgrace them by waiting in a public restaurant?"

"It is an honest and useful occupation."

"Hang it all! I suppose it is honest. But it isn't honorable or respectable. I have shown you that the family is getting up in the world, that there is going to be a vast improvement in its social and financial standing. Under the circumstances, we can't afford to have a common waiter in the house. Think of the disgrace, the ignominy of it. Such connections are impossible in a family with such prestige and such antecedents."

"I had no idea," said Uncle William, softly, "that it was such a terrible thing. I see now my mistake."

"I am not through. The worst is yet to come. You have been imposing upon us. You are not our Uncle William. You are no relation whatever. Mother found it out to-day. She happened to meet a man on the street, an old gentleman, named Burchell, whom she knew long ago. He was my father's schoolmate. They were children together. He told mother that Father had neither brothers nor sisters."

"Nevertheless," said Uncle William, sadly, "I am your father's brother. You have not told me, though, what you and your mother wish."

"I should think that you would see, without my telling you. The only way out of it is for you to take your departure. Mother and I have agreed upon that. Of course we feel that we are under great obligations to you for the money which you advanced when I was in that confounded pickle, and it goes without saying that I intend to pay you back, sometime. When you get settled in your new home, be sure and send me your address."

"And you really wish me to go?"

"Confound it! yes. Why do you make me say it so many times?"

"I shall go; but, if I go, I shall never come

back."

"Come back! why should you come back? We could not expect you to return. There would be no reason for it. I am glad to see that you are so ready to meet our wishes. When will you go? I don't wish to hurry you; but Mother will want to know."

"I shall go to-night. I shall go at once."

"Oh, pshaw! There's no need of any such haste. We don't mean to drive you out like that. To-morrow or even the next day will be early enough."

"I shall go now," said Uncle William, gently. "It will take me but a moment to pack

my things."

Saying this, he turned, and went slowly up the stairway to his room. George, standing at the foot of the stair saw him go into his room and shut the door.

After five minutes of waiting, the young man became somewhat impatient. It shouldn't take the old man all that time to throw what few things he had into his suit case. When ten minutes had passed, George bounded up the stairway, to see what might cause such a delay. When he opened the door and came into the room, he found no one there. Neither was there a sign remaining of the suit case, or of any of Uncle William's things. He went to the window, thinking that his quondam relative had got out upon the eaves, and so to the roof. The window was closed and locked. Passing out of the chamber, he perceived his mother walking along the hallway just below.

"Mother," he called out, "something strange

has happened. Quick, come up here."

Mrs. Carson hurried up the stairs, as quickly as her age and stoutness would permit. George took her into Uncle William's room, and told

her what had happened.

"What a curious thing!" she exclaimed. "The room has a close, musty air, as if no one had used it for weeks. There is dust, too, upon the wash stand and upon the window sill. There are no marks in the dust. The bed looks as if it had not been slept in for a long while. Are you sure he did not come out of the room while your head was turned the other way?"

"I am certain that he did not. I was looking at his door all the while. Besides, where could he have gone to? To set your mind at rest, though, we will look in all the other rooms on

this floor."

They searched every room upon the floor;

but did not find him. Then they descended to the third floor. Amy occupied the front hall chamber, and they found her there.

"Amy," asked her mother, "have you seen Uncle William during the last ten minutes?"

"Yes, mother. He was in my room five minutes ago. I was bending over a tabouret, with my face toward the window, matching some worsteds. He came behind me, put his hand for a moment on my head, and said: 'God be with you, Amy.' I knew just how he looked, that pleasant face of his, with the kindly smile. I paused a moment, pleased with the anticipation of looking at him. When I turned about, he was gone."

Mrs. Carson now told Amy of Uncle

William's mysterious disappearance.

"But do you mean to say," asked Amy, disconsolately, "that you have sent Uncle William away? Why did you do it? How could you do it?"

The mother, daughter and son now went down to the first floor and into the parlor, where they found the other members of the family, with the exception of Dot and Max, who had gone to a candy store upon the next corner.

"Have you seen Uncle William during the last ten minutes?" asked George of Thomas.

"Yes, four or five minutes ago, he opened the library door, looked in, waved his hand, smiled and said: 'Good night, all.' Then he went toward the hallway. I wanted to speak to him,

and passed, myself, into the library, and through the library to the hall. He wasn't there. Neither was he upon the stair. I thought that he might have gone out upon the porch, and I opened the door and looked out. Morris was sitting upon the coping; but had not seen him."

Just then the front door bell rang, and Amy went to the door and let in the two children.

"See what Uncle William has given us!" cried they both in unison, each of them holding up a silver dollar.

"Where and when did you see Uncle

Willam?" asked their grandmother.

"Just now, by the candy store," answered Max. "He put his hand on my shoulder, lifted Dot up and kissed her, told us to be good children and gave us silver dollars."

Mrs. Carson now told of the manner in which Uncle William had vanished from his

room, and how he had appeared to Amy.

"It is very strange, very strange," said she. "He seems to have been in several places at the

same time. I can't account for it."

"No matter about all that," said Amy, "it makes no difference. The main fact is that Uncle William has gone. I know, too, that he has gone for good. We shall never see him again. Oh, dear, oh, dear. To think that I shall never see him again."

She buried her face in her hands, and wept silently. Max hung his head and dug his knuckles into his eyes. Dot roared lustily.

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"Come on! Come on," exclaimed Mrs. Thorne, "we shall never finish that game of bridge. I have forgotten the trump. Come on, Thomas and Morris. It is getting on to nine o'clock. We are accomplishing absolutely nothing."

"I don't think that I care to play any more,"

said Thomas.

"I'm through, for to-night," said Morris. Thomas sat down and lighted his pipe. Morris went into the library. Amy took the two children into the darkness of the front parlor, by the window, and the other four women sat down at the bridge table and took up their cards.

# Nate Sawyer

## CHAPTER I

## A MUNCHAUSEN OF THE FOREST

"Ef ye want to go to Marwood's mills," said Nate Sawyer, the guide, "and I think ye said ye wanted to see old man Marwood, the quickest way and the shortest way is to foller Otter Creek down through the gorge. Howsoever, I'd advise ye to go some other way. This is a case where the longest way round is the shortest way acrost. They call that gorge the 'Devil's Gorge,' and that's what it sure is. There's only one way to go through that gorge, and that's by takin' the left-hand side of it, and then you're liable to drown yerself or get yer neck broke. Don't take the right-hand side of it. Ef ye do, ye might as well make yer will before ye start. Howsoever, yew'd better go another way altogether, say around by Henderson's camp and down along Salmon Creek till ye strike Becraft's."

"I'm going to risk the Devil's Gorge," said Arthur Keene. "I like the name and I think I'll enjoy the trip. If I meet the owner of the Gorge, so much the better. I've always heard that he was a gentlemanly sort of a person."

"Yew may meet up with somethin' worse nor him, or as bad enyhow. There's mighty queer goin's on in that place. I've heard tell by a dozen people who've seen em, and I've seen some extry ordinary strange things there myself. Three or four fellers tells about seein' somethin' gray standin' a hundred feet above em on the rocks, as ef it wuz a woman, and wavin' at em, when no human bein' could hev got where she wuz without flyin'. Then when they looked again, she wa'nt there. And them that chance to be in the woods, on the edge of the left-hand side of the ravine at night, hev seen lights movin' along the face of the cliff on the other side, about half way up and half way down, which I leave to yew, would be unpossible. I seen em myself onct when I wuz a campin' thereabouts. It wuz like a lantern zigzaggin' along about a hundred feet down on 'tother side of the gulch. The walls there are about two hundred feet high and whosoever wuz carryin' that light must hev walked on the wall like a fly."

"Now Nate," said Arthur Keene, "I don't take much stock in those tales. The fellows who saw the spirit on the cliffs did so because they had communed too copiously and frequently with the spirits which reside in certain glass receptacles which they carried in their pockets. Of course, if you say that you saw a light moving along the face of the cliff, I must believe you, at least I must believe that you thought you saw it. Probably, however, some one was carrying a lantern along the bottom of the ravine. You see, it was dark, and you had no way of telling

how far down the cliff it really was."

"No sirree, it wa'nt so dark as all that. It

wa'nt so dark but what I could see the white foam of the creek all of a hundred feet below it. Waal, it's a funny thing, but all of them fellers what seen the woman and the light hed some misfortin' happen to em very shortly arterwards. Arter I seen that light I went straight back to the camp where I wuz stayin.' It was a shack or leanto built up agin the side of the hill. Waal, I missed the path and fell plum through the roof of the shack onto Shorty McCabe, who wuz sleepin' there quite peaceful. He thought I wuz a bear, or catamount, or some such creetur, and kem fer me like blazes, and before we hed done poundin' and clawin' at each other, everythin' vallyble in the camp wuz knocked into smithereens, our close wuz half torn offen us and our looks wuz far from bein' respectable. That's what happened to me after ketchin' sight of that ghost light. Then there wuz an old guide named Bill Covey, who wuz fishin' the stream at the bottom of the gorge. He chanct to look up and saw this female woman, all dressed in gray, and wavin' somethin' white at him. He wuz steppin' along from stone to stone, and hed to mind his footin' fer a moment. when he looked up agin, she wuz gone. Jest then, what with twistin' his neck backwards and not bein' keerful where he wuz steppin', he slipped offen a slippery rock and broke his laig. He wuz an awful while draggin' himself onto a dry place, and he laid there two days, and wuz half dead, before his friends kem along and found him. He pinted out to me onct a ledge about a hundred feet up the cliff, where he said he saw the woman, but I pinted out to him the fact that no human bein', let alone a woman, could ever hev got there. Howsoever, he swore that he seen her there and he sticks to it to this day. Then there wuz Si Henderson, He claimed that he seen her onct when he wuz tryin' to drive some logs down the creek, and it wa'nt an hour arter that before he wuz caught between two logs and hed an arm and three ribs broke. It's fair got so now that no one cares to go up the gorge, pertikler along at dusk, or arterwards."

"Say, Nate," asked Keene, "how much do you really believe yourself of all that rig-marole?"

"Waal, I dunno. I've never seen the ghost myself, but I sure seen the light. Yew'll allow that there's somethin' almighty queer about it all ennyway. There's one thing sartin! It's bad luck to meet up with this female spook, or whatever she is."

"Well, Nate, I'm going to disprove that belief. When I go down the gorge to-morrow, I'm going to keep a sharp lookout for this lady in gray. Perhaps I can get a chance to talk with her. Anyway, this settles it. If there's a female spook in the gorge, you couldn't keep me out of it with a log chain. What's the reason you can't go all the way with me to Glendale anyhow? I've never been this way before and I

have my doubts about being able to find the

right trail."

"I can't do it. That's all there is to it. I've jest got to get back to tother side. I told yew so when we started out. Besides the which, yew'll hev no trouble at all. I'll take yew within sight of the gorge, and all yew'll hev to do is to go down the left-hand side of it until yew strike Marwood's mills, a matter of three or four miles. Glendale, where old man Marwood lives, is a mile or so farther on. Yew can't miss it."

The two men were seated in a small skiff which floated upon the blue surface of Little Horn Lake. Old Nate Sawyer, the guide, had the paddle, and Arthur Keene was trolling, or

casting a fly for trout.

Little Horn Lake was a small transparent lake hemmed about with great hemlock and pine-covered hills—one of the thousand lakes which dot the extent of the great Adirondack wilderness in the State of New York. It belonged to a chain of four or five similar bodies of water, which chain of lakes was the distant source of the large, deep stream called "Otter Creek," upon which were situated the saw mills of the Marwood brothers. The name of this particular pond was Little Horn Lake, it having derived its name probably from its peculiarly winding shape, and its resemblance, as it twisted back and forth among the wooded mountains, to the horn of a half-grown elk. Its immediate

and larger neighbor was called the "Big Horn Lake," by the same system of nomenclature. To the vision of any one who floated upon its bosom not more than a third of the lake was apparent at any time, for the reason that the rest of it was hidden around on the other side of the hills. It was a favorite place for fishermen and deerhunters, but, at the same time, was not often visited, for the reason that it was very far from any point accessible by wagon, and only to be approached through dense and pathless forest.

It was an afternoon of a day in the first part of June. The day was a pleasant one. A few hazy clouds floated slowly across the blue sky, and, just as lazily, their images floated across the mirror-like surface of the lake. The great hills, with their crags and lofty pines, were pictured below in the water with an exactness which, if one could have looked at the picture upside down, would have given the impression that the image in the water was the reality and the reality above was the image. This was while the sun shone. Then presently the sun would be obscured by a passing cloud, and immediately the reflection in the water would lose its distinctness and become darker and more mysterious and beautiful.

Arthur Keene, the man who was fishing, was somewhere about thirty-five years of age; he was a young man of education, means and position, whose home was in a large seaport city of the New England States. He was an

engineer by profession and had built railroads, bridges, reservoirs and docks; he had dredged out harbors and had dug canals. His business had taken him to many parts of the world; he had been mixed up with a South American revolution, had been wrecked in the China Seas, had come in contact with the German authorities in Samoa, and had been escorted to the Albanian frontier by the Turkish police. Quite recently he had fallen heir to a moderate fortune, had given up the active practice of his profession and had become a consulting engineer. He had a small office in a very large office building, belonged to two or three clubs, had no very reprehensible habits and was a confirmed old bachelor

and all round good fellow.

He had now come into the Adirondack woods partly for pleasure and partly upon business. His uncle, John Wainwright, a financier of Boston, owned a tract of timber land in the Adirondack forest of some thirty thousand acres. For a long time the old gentleman had been bothered by timber thieves. They cut down his trees right and left. He couldn't catch them at it and he couldn't prevent it, so that quite frequently he pounded the table with his fist, hopped up and down with rage and swore scandalously. His nephew, Arthur Keene, had now undertaken to discover the identity of these freebooters. This was one of the reasons why he was camping in the woods with the old guide, and was also the reason why he proposed to

visit Stephen Marwood, the man who owned the saw mills upon Otter Creek and at Glendale. As, however, all this has very little, if anything to do with the story, it will not be necessary to go into further particulars about the matter.

Arthur Keene was tall and thin, broadshouldered and long-legged. He was not, strictly speaking, a handsome man. There was that, however, in his athletic figure, his smoothshaven face, his clean-cut features, the smile with which he spoke and the twinkle in his gray eyes which made him good and wholesome to look at.

The guide was a small, sinewy old fellow, whose age it would have been hard to determine. His scanty hair was of a tawny gray, his lanternjawed, Yankeefied face was smooth-shaven, or rather it had been smooth-shaven a week or so before, his mouth was wide, and his lips thin, and when he laughed, which he did at frequent intervals while he was speaking, as if it were to punctuate his remarks, he showed two or three vellow stumps of teeth, resembling nothing so much as the straggling half-fallen stones of a very old graveyard. He wore no beard, with the exception of a tuft of reddish-gray hair, which, rising up from no one knew how far down his long neck, fell over the gray woolen shirt-collar, very much like the beard of a goat.

Nate Sawyer was the name of this peculiar personage, and, as noted above, he was of an uncertain age. He looked to be fifty, but to one

who examined him closely it seemed just possible that he was sixty or even older. He had been a guide in the Adirondack region so long that visitors to that locality could not remember a time when he was not a guide. He made his headquarters on the eastern border of the forest, and it was from this point that the party of two which we are describing had entered the wilderness.

There were many singular traits in the character of Nate. His actions, his gestures, and his words were so original, so unexpected and so comical, that he was a constant source of surprise and joy to those who found themselves in his society.

In fact, it was said by those who professed to know the old gentleman thoroughly that he had a screw loose somewhere, or that he had rooms to let in the upper story, though one might talk with him a whole day and not come to such

a conclusion.

It was a curious fact that Nate had no antecedents. He was not a native of the small town which he made his headquarters, neither was it known from what part of the country he had come. He had simply turned up there a number of years before as a piece of driftwood is thrown by the tide upon the beach. He was the erratic character of the place, and a mystery to the people, and they shook their heads when asked about him as a matter beyond and above their comprehension.

Nate Sawyer also had his disagreeable qualities. Besides being contradictory and stubborn, he had the reprehensible habit of mixing himself up in the conversation of his employers, and of commenting upon every topic which was broached. He was also an inveterate boaster, and, to believe him, nothing ever had been or ever would be done in any direction whatever better than he had done or could or would do it himself. Great must have been the virtues of Nate to counterbalance his shortcomings, and great indeed they were. He knew every foot of the ground bounded by the Black River on the west, by Lake Champlain and Lake George on the east, and by the Mohawk and the St. Lawrence rivers, respectively, on the south and north. His legs seemed to be made of indiarubber and to move with the regularity and tirelessness of a machine. He could paddle a boat as fast as an ordinary man could row it, and, if necessary, without making the least sound. He knew where and how trout could be caught at any time of the season; and if there was a buck within fifty miles he could bring you within sight of it. Add to this the fact that Nate was a most cleanly and artistic cook, and we can see why, notwithstanding his many defects, he was the guide most sought after by visitors to the great forest of the Adirondacks.

Nate was also an inveterate story-teller. He was possessed of an inexhaustible fund of yarns, the most of them connected with the woods in

which he had spent his life, and these yarns he spun upon the slightest provocation, and often at the most inconvenient times. When the spell was upon him and he had started in upon his narrative, it was useless to try to stop him. He was like the Ancient Mariner with the wedding guest. He did not hold his audience with a glittering eye, but he suspended all business, whatever it was, tramping, building of camps, rowing or cooking, until the story was told; so one just had to listen to him, as nothing could be done until he had unburdened himself.

At the bottom he was of a kindly and religious nature and once a friend he was always a friend. Beneath his outside coating of eccentricities there was a vein of good, sterling common sense, and he might always be depended upon to take the right side upon every moral question. He was "full of wise saws and modern instances," and was possessed of an unlimited store of quaint sayings and proverbs which he used "to point a moral or adorn a tale."

Nate Sawyer presently remarked:

"Speakin' of Bill Covey, the old guide, seein' that gray spook woman in the Devil's Gorge, reminds me of somethin' which happened right hereabouts. Bill Covey was an almighty good guide, specially at deer-huntin'. In those days, as it is now, it was agin the law to go arter deer with hounds. Waal, Bill Covey hed a way of barkin' like a dawg that was een a

most as good as ef he hed a hound with him. He'd leave the shootin' party in the runways, and go scoutin' around miles and miles through the woods, all the time barkin' like a dawg, till he ended up by drivin' what deer they wuz in them parts down to the runways where his party could get a shot at em. That barkin' of hisn was sure a vallyble asset. Waal, one day, Bill met up with a misforten. He was in a canoe in the middle of Hemlock Lake, which is a pond, a quarter of a mile across, and off there a mile or so to the west of where we be now, when he hed a coughin' fit and, all on a sudden, he coughed his false teeth right outen his mouth into the lake. He spent two days tryin' to fish em up outen the lake, but 'twant no use as the water was all of twenty feet deep at that pint where he lost em. This loss of his false teeth most certain sure put Bill in a hole. He couldn't bark no longer and beside that, he couldn't eat his vittles, let alone chewin' tobakker, so he up stakes and puts for settled country, where he gets a new set of teeth from one of them dentist fellers. Howsomever, I don't know how it was, but he never could bark nateral like as he useter, praps there wuz a difference in the teeth, but that has nothin' to do with the story. A year or so arter that old Bill cashed in his checks, and pretty soon they began to tell awful queer yarns about that pond where Bill lost his teeth. Parties who camped there said as how at night, they could hear old Bill barkin' like a dawg out on the lake. I happened to be along there one time shortly arter I heard this and I allowed that I'd find out the truth about it; so I camped alongside the pond and, sure enough, when night came, I heard the barkin' of a dawg out on the lake, for all the world as if 'twere old Bill. Then I walked around the lake, but it always seemed to come from the middle of the water. The thing kept up two or three hours, off and on, and then it stopped. Now comes the singeler part of it. Next day I wuz fishin' in the pond and, of a sudden, I got a bite as if I'd ketched a whale. When I got the crittur into the boat, which I wuz all of an hour a doin', so help me, it wuz a brook trout that weighed all of six pounds and measured all of two feet. He wuz an ugly-lookin' old chap, scarred and marked with a hundred fights and looked to be leastways a hundred years old. Waal, when I cut that fish open, what d'yew think I found in his gullet? So help me, I found old Bill's false teeth. Now I won't say that it wuz that there fish that wuz doin' the barkin', but it's the solemn truth that no one ever heard any barkin' on the pond arter I caught the fish."

"Have you the teeth yet?" asked Keene.

"Naw, what d' I want of the teeth? I gave em to old Dan Ferguson's wife, down Piseco

way-she's chewin' with em yet."

Nate now paddled the boat to their camp, which stood upon the shore of the lake, and, after the evening meal, cooked by the guide,

had been eaten, and when the shades of night had descended upon the forest, a smoking fire of pine branches was kindled, and the two men, stretched upon the ground before it, spent an hour or more in arranging their plans for the morrow and talking over the experiences of the days passed together in that delightful spot.

days passed together in that delightful spot.

"I have been wondering," said Keene,
"whether my luggage will have put in an appearance at Glendale by the time I arrive. You know, Nate, that I left word to have it expressed. It would be an awkward thing if it has not turned up after all. A man who has spent ten days roughing it in the woods wouldn't make a very creditable impression in a respectable and refined family."

"Yaas, yew take my word fer it, yew'll want all your store close when yew git thar. They live in a house which is a regler castell, and there's two gals there which, fer looks, has got

all the women beat in these six counties."

"Who are the two girls, Nate?"

"One of em is old Marwood's darter and the other's his niece. Say, they're that good-lookin' that they got all the young fellers crazy within forty miles. Did ye ever hear about the Marwoods where yew come from? No? Waal, the history of that family would make excitin' readin', and that's a fact. In the first place, that's to say, when they first came here, twenty or thirty years ago, there wuz two brothers of em, Steve Marwood and Kit Marwood. Steve

wuz allus a mean kind of an old skinflint, cold and calculatin' and that religious that he wouldn't look sideways on Sunday. Kit Marwood wuz a different kind of a man altogether. Everyone liked Kit. He wuz free and easy and good-natured, and a feller comin' to him with a hard luck story never went away without somethin'. Kit though had a devil of a temper. He'd git riled mighty quick, then, when he got over it, he'd ask your parding and yew ginerally thought more of him than ever. Now there wuz a man named Beriah Crane, who hed a small mill on Otter creek, above the Marwood mills. He wa'nt of no account in pertikler, and hed a hard time to git along. Waal, the Marwoods, wantin' to git more power, bought up all the land on the creek above Crane's, and put up a big dam there and shut off Crane's water, so that he wuz put out of bizness. With that he sues em, and kept on suin' em till the thing had run on four or five years, and he had used up what little money he had with them consarned sharks of lawyers. Things wuz in this shape when the three of em, Steve and Kit Marwood and Beriah Crane, met on the banks of the creek, up in the woods, to argify matters. Kit said somethin' to Crane and Crane said somethin' ornery to Kit, which got his dander up somethin' awful, so that he up and fetched Crane a crack on the pate which knocked him endways. Whether it wuz the crack, or whether his head hit on a stone, I don't know. Enyway

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they looked him over and found that he wuz deader than a mackerel. No one knows what they did with the body, most likely buried it, or hove it into the creek, enyway, no one ever met up with it. That night Kit Marwood lit out fer furrin parts, and never came back. Mind yew, this is, the most of it, hearsay and what folks made up out of their own heads. They say that Kit Marwood made a fortin on the other side of the water and that he married there and had one child, a darter, and that at last he and his wife died; at which, Steve Marwood went and brought the child home with him to live. I don't know how much of this is true. Enyway, there is the gal at Marwood's house to prove part of it."

"What is the reason they didn't extradite Kit Marwood and try him for the murder of

Crane?"

"Extrydite, is it? They couldn't extrydite him. In the first place they couldn't meet up with him, though I've heard tell that they tried to. In the second place, they couldn't fasten no crime onto him. I know somethin' of the law myself, and I know yew've either got to find the body, or else yew've got to prove the killin' by eye witnesses. Sarcumstantial evidence don't go, when yew can't find the body. There wuz no one saw him killed and no one ever found the corpse. So that's all there is to it."

The old guide now knocked out the ashes from his pipe and proceeded to fill it from a package of scrap tobacco, of which he always seemed to have a limitless supply. This done, he stretched himself more at his ease before the fire and puffed away contentedly. Arthur Keene then commenced to tell of his various and thrilling experiences by land and sea in the many quarters of the globe to which his affairs had taken him. Old Nate was a most interested and delighted listener, and, now and then, he interposed a remark so wise, so humorous and so pat to the purpose, that Keene could not but wonder at his shrewdness, his knowledge of the world, and his kindly phil-

osophy.

"Mr. Keene," at length interrupted old Nate, "these adventures of yourn in furrin parts is sure some surprisin', but I can tell ye a story about somethin' which happened on this very lake which is as curus as anythin' ye hev met up with in all your travels. Yew remember lookin' at that there tumble-down shack over on the pint? I wuz campin' there about twenty years ago or more, along with another guide, named Shorty McCabe, and some city chaps. Waal, we wuz eatin' breakfast one Sunday mornin' when, all at onct, we heered a drum and a bugle. Natchully, we all ran out on to the dock, which wuz standin' there then, to see what 'twas all about and, lookin' up the lake, we saw, a mile away, comin' round the bend, a percession of three boats filled with people. The boats wuz all ornymented with evergreens and, in the bow

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of the fust boat there wuz a pole with a white

flag onto it."

"Now as soon as I see the percession I knew what 'twas, because of hevin' heered all about the bizness. It seems that a man whose name wuz Dr. Teed, and who wuz a herb doctor, had got tired of pizenin' people without sufficient remooneration, and he'd invented a new religion, constituotin' himself the head of the same, and callin' himself God's Rice Gerent."

"You mean God's Vice Gerent," suggested

Keene.

"Waal, somethin' like that, but I don't see as it matters. Now this Dr. Teed hed built a large wooden shack around the hill there at the head of the lake, which he called the tabernacle, and hed gathered round him a crowd of looney people, made up of short-haired women and long-haired men, who called theirselves his disciples, and here they wuz comin' down the lake, a beatin' on drums and a blowin' on bugles, and what'd ye think they wuz comin' down fer?

"So help me they wuz comin' down to see this man Teed walk on the water, which he hed promised to do, when he hed got to the outlet. Waal, fer some reason, he hed decided to land at our dock, wishin', I suppose, to put the thing off as long as possible. When the fust boat kem up to the dock, the Vice Gerent wuz a-standin' in the bow. As he went to step from the boat, he wuz lookin' straight ahead of him, solemn like, as if he wuz seein' things and, not bein'

keerful where he stepped, he missed his footin' and went kerplunk into the lake. Did he walk on the water? Not to any great extent. He went plumb to the bottom like a stone. Then he riz to the top, and wuz jest sinkin' for the second time, when I grabbed up a boat hook offen the dock and fished around and hooked it inter the waistband of the back of his breeches and, Shorty McCabe helpin', pulled him out onto the dock. Say, he wuz a sight. A droundid rat was nothin' to him. Did I get any thanks fer it? Not so's yew could notice it. One ole woman sed as how I oughter be ashamed of m'self, and she hoped Elisha's bears would get me fer handlin' God's anointed in sech a brutal way."

"Now about this Dr. Teed: I heerd of him shortly arterwards in Chicawgo and agin in Californy, and a year or two ago, I seen in the papers he'd died in Floridy at the ripe old age of eighty; that he hed a plantation there of more'n fifty thousand acres, which was called New Jerusalem, and a colony of some thousands of disciples who chipped in whenever he sed the word, and that he wuz worth more'n a

million dollars."

"I tell ye, this inventin' of new religions pays. There wuz Dr. Teed and Elder Dowie and Joseph Smith and a man named Miller and a lot of others whose names I disremember. Didn't they all make big fortens outen it? I tell ye though, Mr. Keene, the old religion is

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good enough fer me. More'n twenty-five years ago I pinned my faith to it, and I've never been

sorry for it.

"It beats all how all those new religion fellers will put up that bluff about walkin' on the water. Walkin' on the water seems to appeal to em. Howsomever, I never see but one chap get away with it. He wuz a long-haired nervy cuss what lived at Genevy, a town in Western N'York on Seneca Lake. He give out, that sech a day, at sech an hour, he was goin' fer to walk on the lake. Waal, when the time kem and he got down there, there wuz more'n a thousand people on hand to see him do it. And he sez to em, sez he: 'Hev ye faith that I kin walk on the water?' and they all shouted out 'Naw.' 'Then,' sez he, it don't go. I can't walk on the water unless ye hev faith. Go away and come down here next week on the same day and hour and, ef ye hev faith, I will walk on the water.' Waal, the time kem round agin, and by that time there wuz twict as many people as before. And he sez to em, sez he: 'Hev ye faith that I kin walk on the water?' And they cried out 'Yes.' 'Do you really and truly believe that I kin do it?' and they all shouted: 'You bet we do.' 'Then,' sez he, 'There's no use in my doin' it,' and with that, he lights out and leaves em."

"Where did you fasten the boat, Nate?" asked Keene suddenly. "I didn't see it as I

strolled down to the lake after supper."

"I hauled it up on the right of that big rock

down there. I allowed it would be safer there ef the wind got up."

"But if you hauled it up to the right of the rock, I would have seen it, and I'll swear that it

wasn't there."

"I'll bet ye a dollar it's there," cried Nate, springing to his feet and hastening down to the beach. Keene followed him. When they came within sight of the rock, the right-hand side of which was alone visible from the direction in which they came, there was no boat to be seen. Nate, however, without hesitating, passed around to the other side of the rock and called out:

"Here she is! and it's a good thing ye didn't

bet."

"But you said the right-hand side," objected Keene. "And the boat is drawn up on the lefthand side."

"Certainly I said the right-hand side; and isn't it the right-hand as ye come in with the boat? Ef it's the right-hand side one time, it's the right-hand side all the time. That's the way I figger."

### CHAPTER II

## THE DEVIL'S GORGE

After they had turned in for the night it began to rain; then the wind arose and swept through the forest with a sound like the breaking of heavy surf upon the shore. Now and then they could hear the crashing of a branch above them, and often the water would come trickling through the bark roof of their leanto upon their faces, and they would have to get up and change their positions. To repay them, however, for the discomforts of the night, the sun arose within a sky which showed a few fleecy clouds, which were sailing along before a brisk, cool breeze. The rain-drops still hung upon the leaves and glistened in the grass. The air was fresh and invigorating, and Keene felt that it was just the day for his long journey through the forest. After a hasty breakfast the two men made such small preparations as were necessary, and, taking one of the two boats which they possessed, started off on their voyage.

Twelve or fifteen miles of the journey were to be made by water. There were four lakes in the chain, and only one carry was necessary,—that from the third to the fourth lake. Nate expected to reach the end of the fourth lake by eleven o'clock, they having started at six in the

morning; and then the arduous part of their

task was to begin.

The day was a fine one. The deep-blue sky was almost clear of clouds, and what wind there was blew in the right direction. There was a pleasant ripple upon the water, and the green of the forest seemed brighter and more emeraldlike on account of the recent rain. Nothing in nature could be imagined more wild and picturesque, more varied and changing, than the different vistas which opened to their gaze as they followed the windings of the lake, or sped rapidly along the dark forest-hemmed streams. Now they would paddle along some narrow neck of the body of water, the steep limestone cliffs rising on either side within a stone's throw, and giving back their voices in startling echoes. Then suddenly they would dart forth into what seemed a small wood-surrounded basin, seemingly without an outlet, and into which no man had come before, startling a covey of ducks or other aquatic fowl. Now they would skirt a rocky promontory, whose boulders had taken queer, outlandish shapes, like the distorted figures and faces of men or animals, and anon, suddenly turning with a bend of the lake, the extent of water would widen to a mile or more, and its fringe of forest would dwindle in the distance, until it looked a green hazy rim.

When they started in the early morning, a mountain could be seen rising from the wilderness away off to the north upon their right hand.

It looked blue and indistinct with the distance, and its head was encircled with a wreath of cloud. All the morning long it was never out of sight. Sometimes it seemed quite near them, and they could make out the forms of the gigantic pines and hemlocks with which it was clothed, or the ragged outlines of its crags and fissures. At other times it would be as at first, only a dim blue outline, according as the twisting and turning of the lakes brought them near

or carried them away from it.

It must not be supposed that Nate held his peace during the long transit across the waters of the chain of lakes. In fact, he kept up an incessant talking upon one subject or another. He was familiar with every point which came into view, and always had some anecdote to relate in reference to it, in which, of course, he himself had played the all-important part. Sometimes Keene would listen to him, but the greater part of the time he seemed occupied with his own thoughts, which were so engrossing that the monotonous clack of the old man's tongue excited his attention no more than the dash of the paddle in the water, or the slapping of the ripples against the bow of the boat. At certain intervals, however, Nate would draw the long bow so audaciously that the twang of it would have roused the seven sleepers.

Presently the guide cast a judicial eye around

upon the water.

"I reckon it wuz right about here," said he,

"that I hed the race with Shorty McCabe and the deer."

"How was it?" asked Keene. "You and Shorty against the deer, or every one for himself?"

"Neither the one or the other. Shorty and the deer wuz goin' tandem and I wuz goin' it alone. Yew see it wuz this away-Shorty and I wuz in a skiff, paddlin' toward that rock ledge over on the north shore. All at onct, when we hed got within a hundred feet of it, a tarnation big buck comes out of the brush there on the ledge and stands lookin' at us. Shorty up with his rifle quick, and hit the buck right between the eyes, and he dropped plumb dead on the rocks, about six feet from the water. Leastways, we supposed he wuz dead. Waal, we landed and Shorty took a half-inch hemp line, about thirty feet long, which we hed in the boat, and made it fast to the deer's horns, meanin' to throw the other end over a tree, which stood near by, so's we could hoist him up and skin and dress the critter. Shorty took the other end of the line and tied it round his middle, so's he'd hev his hands free, and went to climb the tree. When he wuz half way up, that buck riz right up on his feet, and stood there a second or two, sorter dazed like. I hollered to Shorty, but I wuz too late. The deer took a jump about fifteen feet out into the lake, and Shorty went down outen the tree and into the water, without touchin' ground. I pushed the boat off and jumped into it and, before I cud lay hold of the paddle, they wuz fifty feet away, makin for tother side of the lake. It wuz a good light skiff and I'm purty good with a paddle, but I couldn't overhaul em, do my darndest. I wuz afraid Shorty'd be drowndid, so I hollered out: 'Cut the rope, yew tarnation fool!' 'Naw, I won't cut no rope,' he hollered back. Yew can see that the lake is all of a mile wide at that pint. Waal, thet buck wa'nt more'n four minutes gittin' acrost. I timed him by my watch. When the deer made the shore, he lepped into the brush in the shake of a lamb's tail, Shorty goin' arter him and takin' steps ten feet long. I saw at onct it wa'nt no use follerin' of em. They wuz goin' sech a clip that I wa'nt in their class, so I sot in the boat waitin' fer Shorty to come back. It wuz all of two hours before he kem outen the woods. His face and his hands wuz scratched and bleedin' somethin' awful, his coat and shirt wuz most torn offen his back, and I wouldn't hev put his pants on a scarecrow. I seed a piece of frayed rope hangin' to him, about three feet long, and I sez to him, sez I: "What ye done with the buck?"

"I didn't do nothin' with him," sez he.

"Did ye cut the rope?" sez I.

"Do I look like it?" sez he, and that wuz all

I could get outen him."

"Nate," said Keene, "you're a wonder. With your extraordinary and vivid imagination, you could make a fortune with the publishers. Now this Mr. McCabe, was he the gentleman whose slumbers you so ruthlessly and unceremoniously interrupted, the night you perceived the ignis fatuus upon the cliffside?"

"Say, what yew talkin' about? Oh, yaas, he wuz the very same feller. It sure brought me

bad luck seein' that ghost light."

"It seems to me, Nate, that Mr. McCabe was the man who had the bad luck. According to your own story, he had much the worst of it. He hadn't seen any light; though he probably saw stars when you fell upon him through the roof of the shack. I've seen a good deal of the world, and I've made up my mind that there isn't anything in this luck idea, either one way or the other. Let me get a look at that gray lady who walks along the side of the cliffs and

I'll tell you how she does it."
"Now, Mr. Keene, don't yew go lookin' arter her. Yew'll find trouble enough natchully

climbin' down the gorge, without lookin' fer it a purpose. When yew are takin' that almighty resky road, yew don't want to be thinkin' about ghosts and sperits. Yew want to be thinkin' about somethin' cheerful. It'll make the way easier and surer. The cheerfullest thing I knows of is another story about that same Shorty McCabe. It sure makes me cheerful, every time I think of it. Say, did I ever tell ye that story about Shorty McCabe and the woodchuck?"

"I do not recollect, Nate, that you ever told me a story which contained a woodchuck."

"Waal, this wuz the way of it: Three year ago, last winter, it bein' an uncommon hard winter, Shorty was trappin' fur animals up on Cranberry River. He hed a shack built alongside the river, and was doin' fairly well, though feelin' sorter lonely like. About a half mile up the river, another trapper, named Si Henderson, hed a shack, and there wuz still another shack, a mile further on, owned by a man named Hank Perkins. Now Shorty was a sawed-off, freckled-faced red-headed Irishman. He hed a big mouth, and when he grinned, which he did most of the time, it reached from one ear to tother. He wuz a good-natured, accommodating chap, but awful obstinate and a bad man to tackle when he got riled. On the other hand, Si Henderson was a sour, mean kind of a cuss, jest natchully grouchy and continooaly tryin' to make hisself disagreeable. It was the day before Christmus and Shorty, feelin' as I said, sorter lonely, dropped in to pay Si a call. Wall, Si begins tellin' him at onct what a mighty fine Christmus dinner he wuz going to hev, and how he hed given Hank Perkins a invite to eat it with him. A feller hed come by with a pack the day before, and hed brought him a mince pie, and a plum puddin' and doughnuts and jelly and celery and raisins and all that sort of trimmin's. He took Shorty to the cupboard and showed em to him, and went on describin' the banquet he wuz goin' to hev, till Shorty's mouth watered to think of it.

"'But that's not all,' says Si. 'I got somethin' a heap better'n all that.' Then he took Shorty into the shed, where he'd hung it upon a nail, to keep it cold, and showed him a uncommon big fat buck rabbit, skinned and dressed, which he hed shot the day before. 'I'm goin' to stuff it with bread crumbs and sage and onions and salt pork, chopped up fine,' sez he, 'and baste it with butter and salt and pepper.' Shorty thought all the time that he wuz goin' to get a invite to the dinner hisself, but when Si never ast him, he said, 'Good evenin', pleasant like and left and went hum. When he got there he set thinkin' about thet dinner, and the longer he set, the more he thought that Si Henderson wuz the meanest cuss alive. Presently he sez to himself, sez he: 'I'll fix him.' So he got up and went to a woodchuck's hole in the neighborhood, that he knowed of, and smoked the critter out and killed him. He was tarnation big fer a woodchuck, and, when he hed skinned and dressed him, and cut the head and paws off, he looked uncommon like a good sized buck rabbit. Waal, the next mornin', bright and early, when he knowed that Si Henderson would be off lookin' arter his traps, he took the beast and the skin and went up to Si Henderson's shack, and picked the lock with a nail, and took the rabbit down, and hung the woodchuck up instead. Then he went around outside of the back, where Si hed the rabbit's skin nailed on the door, and he pried it off and nailed the woodchuck's skin in its place. Then he went back hum and stuffed the rabbit and put it in the oven to bake. When it kem noon time, when he thought that Si and Hank would be eatin' dinner, he went up to Si's and dropped in casual like. When he kem in, they wuz jest finishin' off the woodchuck, and each of em hed a hind laig in his hand, a-cleanin' of it with his teeth.

"Seein' as it wuz all eaten up, Si sez to Shorty: 'Sit down, Shorty,' sez he, 'and try a piece of this rabbit.' 'Naw,' sez Shorty, 'I never did care fer woodchuck.' 'What ye mean by that?' sez Si. 'What I mean', sez Shorty, 'is that I never could abide the taste of that animile. Ef I swallowed one bit of it, it would sure turn my stummick.' 'D'yew mean to say,' sez Si, that this ere is not a rabbit?' 'I sure do,' sez Shorty. 'Look at them laigs. Did ye ever see laigs like them on a rabbit?' With that, Hank Perkins looked at the laig which he held in his hand. 'It surely is uncommon short for a rabbit's laig,' sez he. 'Say, yew fellers,' sez Si, 'would ye know a rabbit's skin, ef ye saw one?' 'Sure,' sez Hank Perkins and Shorty. 'Then, come with me and I'll show ye the skin of this one we jest eat.' Savin' that, he got up and took em around to the back of the house. When he saw the woodchuck's skin, with its hed and short ears and short paws nailed to the door, he stood as if he wuz goin' to throw a fit. Hank Perkins put his hand on his stummick and made a face as if he wuz goin' to die, 'Quick!' sez he, 'Where's the whiskey?' with that he runs around to the front of the shack and into the door, and Si and Shorty arter him. 'Why, I knowed all the time, Hank,' sez Shorty, 'thet the animile wuz a woodchuck, but I said nothin' cause I allowed Si wuz goin' to hev a leetle fun with ye.' 'He wuz, wuz he?' hollered Hank Perkins, 'Waal, I'll teach yew, Si Henderson, that yew can't feed me no woodchuck.' With thet he lights into Si Henderson, and the things thet happened fer the next five minutes in that shack wuz somethin' shameful. When they got through, it wuz like a battle field. Si and Hank, and the floor and the ceilin' and walls, wuz jest plastered with stuffin' and gravy and jelly and pie and puddin' and butter and a lot of other things, too numerous to mention. All the time it wuz goin' on, Shorty McCabe stood in the doorway a-laffin' at em. When they got more quiet and he couldn't laff enny more, he wuz so weak, he went home and got the rabbit outen the oven and set down and eat his Christmus dinner, peaceful and happy.

"Waal, thet's the end of the story, Mr. Keene; and yew sure will allow thet it's a cheerful one. I often think of it when I feel sorter down in the mouth like. It chirks me up wonderful. I jest got to the end of it in time, too, fer here we are, at the end of our float; and now ye'll have the puttiest tramp through the woods

that ye ever hed."

As Nate spoke the boat grated against the

gravel, and the old man sprang out and hauled it upon the bank. They had gained the end of the fourth lake in the chain, and their journey by land was now to commence. To their left was the outlet of the lake, which took the name of Otter Creek, the same stream upon which were situated, fifteen or twenty miles farther

down, the mills of Stephen Marwood.

Where the lake narrowed to the outlet the water was almost covered with a carpet of water-lily pads; but, the season not being sufficiently advanced, there were none of the flowers in bloom. This carpet of leaves, however, was divided in the center by the swift, deep, black current of the lake, as it swept onward into the outlet. The outlet itself, or creek, narrowed up after it left the lake until it rushed beneath the overarching forest, with scarcely the width of twenty feet. The great pine, hemlock, and tamarack-trees interlaced their branches above it, and it seemed altogether like some mythological river, which, plunging into some great forest, is lost forever and swallowed up in the bowels of the earth.

Such were the thoughts of Keene as he followed with his eye the deep, dark, turbulent torrent to the point where it was so mysteriously lost in the forest, and he felt the desire to take boat again and, trusting himself to the will of the stream, float down through this unknown region, and fathom the mysteries which he felt sure it contained.

"What is to hinder us, Nate, from paddling down the creek? The water seems deep, and the current, though strong, doesn't look dangerous. Furthermore, it would take us in the right direction."

Nate looked at his interlocutor very much as he would at an escaped lunatic. "There's nothin' to hinder us at all, unless it's such trifles as bein' drowned or knocked into a cocked hat goin' over the falls. Sam Gridley tried it in '65, and he never said how he liked it, seein' as how his head was stove in when they found him below Marwood's mills a week arterwards. There was another gent went down eight or ten years arter that, and his boat kem down out of the woods empty. So ye see he never even got to the rapids. Mebbe ye'd prefer goin' by boat, but ef ye go with me ye'll have to walk, I guess."

With this, Nate, who had picked up out of the boat such small things as Keene had found it necessary to take with him, struck out in a not very well-defined path which led from the lake into the woods, and his employer followed him, with certain reservations in his mind as to the absolute correctness of his guide's infor-

mation about Otter Creek.

Very soon the path, if path it might be called, vanished altogether. The forest became dense and sombre, and only a patch of blue sky, here and there, could be seen between the closely-thatched roof of pine and hemlock branches above their heads. To Keene's mind,

not the least indication or sign existed which might serve to guide them, and he could not help but admire the unhesitating accuracy and certainty of old Nate, who never deviating to the right or left, kept up his long swinging stride or shamble; a sort of an automatic, three-miles-to-the-hour gait, which the young man, though well trained and endowed with more than his own proper share of sinew and endurance, found it difficult to imitate.

Now and then, at intervals ranging from fifteen minutes to an hour, they would come within sight or hearing of Otter Creek, which proved conclusively that the guide was taking the right direction. Presently they came upon a big black bear drinking at the edge of the stream. At the noise which the two men made crashing through the underbrush, the bear ceased drinking and, sitting upright upon his haunches, gazed at them for a long moment with a most comical expression of surprise and annoyance upon his countenance. He then dropped down upon all fours and silently trotted off into the forest.

"He was more skeered than we were," said Nate. "Did ye ever hear that story about Old Ike Brockway and Miss Davidson and the bear?" he asked after a few minutes.

"No," answered Keene, "I can't say that I have. I would like to hear it though if you will guarantee that it is a perfectly true story."

"I will take my affidavy that every word of

it is the solemn gospel truth. Yew see it was like this; there was an old feller out Clearwater way named Ike Brockway, and he wa'nt so very old either, say fifty or thereabouts. He was six feet three inches tall and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. It was all bone and muscle too, no extry flesh, and he was as strong as a horse and as tough as a piece of second growth hickory. Yew've heerd tell of men that could whip their weight in wildcats; make em catamounts and old Ike could get away with em. Ike was an old bach and that modest and bashful, pertikler as to women folks, that he'd go a mile outen his way to get rid of meetin' up with a female. Waal, there was a widder woman in them parts named Miss Davidson. She was pretty near as old as Ike and about as big. She was six feet if she was an inch and broad to match. Now arter lookin' over the stock of men folks around there, she hit on Ike Brockway and allowed that she was goin to marry him, but old Ike, when someone told him of it, allowed, with a lot of dreadful strong language, that she wa'nt. Waal, it was five years ago last November; there wa'nt any snow on the ground, but it was awful cold, and Ike Brockway hitched up a team to a big, two-seated buckboard, to take some groceries to a huntin' camp, some twenty miles into the wood. Me and another chap were goin' with him to act as guides for the party of city fellers who was at the camp. Waal, at the last moment, along comes Miss Davidson and says as how she hed a sister livin' somewhere along near the camp where Ike was goin', that it was about time she paid her a visit and she guessed she'd go along too. Ike said she hed another guess comin,' but she talked and persuaded that strenuous that Ike finally told her to come along. Then Miss Davidson she comes out to get in the buckboard. She hed on one of these big fur coats down to her heels, made of dawg skin, with long yeller and white fur, and she throws her things into the bottom of the wagon and jumps up on the front seat, side of old man Brockway.

"Look a here," says he, "women folks allus rides in the back seats."

"Waal here's a woman that don't ride in no back seat, Ike Brockway," says she. "The front

seat is good enough for me."

Then Ike saw that he couldn't help it, and he was that mad that he said some cuss words under his breath and gave the horses a cut with his whip and away we started rattlety bang. But Miss Davidson she didn't mind it, but snuggled up clost to old Brockway, and he edged away as far as he could on the off side of the seat. When we got well into the woods, that road was certainly terrible. It was a corduroy road, made of trees about eight inches thick, with here and there a fillin' of cobble stones. Sometimes the wagon would go down into a hole three feet deep and sometimes it would jump up two feet high into the air. We hed hard work to

keep in our seats and every time there'd come a bump, Miss Davidson would throw her both arms around old Brockway as ef she was goin'

to squeeze the daylight outen him.

"Waal, when we'd got about halfway to the camp, Ike pulled up the team and says as how, the winter before, he'd found a curus kind of a cave, some two hundred feet off in the woods from the pint where we then were, and that he'd allowed to find out what there was of it, the first time he got the chance. So he hitched the team to a tree and we all set out to go with him to the cave. He says to Miss Davidson:

"Yew set still in the buckboard till we come

back."

But she says.

"Not much I won't set still in the buckboard. I'm a lone woman and there's no tellin' what bears and painters and sech like there is around here. Where yew go I go." So go she did.

Now arter we hed walked up a trail some two or three hundred feet, we came to a ravine and, in the side of a hill, which was all trees and rocks, there was a cave, a black, still-lookin' hole, about seven feet high and three feet across.

"I'm goin' in there," says old Brockway, "to see what I can find. Yew wait here for me."
"Yew got no business to go in that hole

"Yew got no business to go in that hole alone," says Miss Davidson. "Ef yew go in, I'm goin with yew. Your folks is friends of mine and they'd expect me to look arter you."

"No, you're not goin' in with me," says Ike.

"Yes, I be goin' in with yew?" says she.

"Boys," says old Brockway, "I won't have her goin' in with me. Ef she starts to foller me, yew jest hold her."

With that he goes into the cave and we starts to hold Miss Davidson, but she didn't need no holdin,' bein' as how she never meant to go in at all.

Waal, Ike had been in the hole about a minute, and we was a standin' some fifty feet off a waitin' for him when, all at once, we heard a noise, "Pad, pad, pad," comin' along the trail, then all on a sudden, round the corner of the rocks, comes trottin' a great she black bear, as big as a cow. She stopped and looked at us for a moment, as ef she said: "What the blazes you doin' here?" Then, she headed for the cave and moseyed in as ef she lived there. Miss Davidson made as if she was goin' to faint and I hollered to old Brockway to look out, but we found arterwards that he thought we was foolin' or somethin'.

Presently we heard Ike a cryin' out: "Miss Davidson, what yer a doin' in here? I told yew to stay outside, 'Taint decent yew bein' in here alone with a man. What yew ketchin' hold of me fer? Hey, leggo there. Stop your squeezin'. Yew aint no lady to be doin' this before witnesses. By Gum, you're scratchin' my face. Ef yew wan't a female woman I'd soak yew one for fair. Leggo, I say, you're huggin' me to break my breast bone. Ouch! leggo, by hokey, I'll soak yew one anyway."

With that we heard him soak the bear with a heavy, soft thud, not once, but a dozen times. Then there came grunts from the bear and howls from old Brockway and, all at once, he came burstin' outen the hole like a house afire, with blood tricklin' down his face and his close half offen him. When he saw Miss Davidson he fetched up short and stared at her as ef his eyes would pop outen his head.

"Wan't yew in the cave then?" said he, half

crazy like.

She drew herself up haughty as ennythin'.

"What, I in that cave with yew," says she. "I think I see myself goin' in a cave with any man."

"Then, ef it wan't yew, what, in Gawd's

name was it?" he asked, all shakin' like.

"That's what it was, yew awful man," says she, pintin to the bear, who was jest comin' outen the hole.

When the bear got out, she stood up on her hind legs and opened her mouth and lolled out her tongue jest as ef she was a-laffin' at old Brockway. Then, she dropped down on all fours again and ambled away into the woods as peaceable as ennythin'.

"Waal, ding me ef I didn't think it was yew,"

says Ike.

Miss Davidson at that let out a regler shriek.

"What, yew good-fer-nothin old ignoramus!

Yew take a nasty, black, four-legged creeter for me! That's the same as callin' me a bear. I'm a poor, lone woman and I've hed my trials but I've never been so doggoned insulted like this before."

Waal, old Brockway seen that he hedn't spoke to her jest right and he tried to square himself with her every which way, but it wan't no use. She wouldn't have no excuses and kep' lambastin' him in the buckboard, all the way in

to the camp.

When we got there, Ike hed to take to bed for two days, what with the scratches and sore bones that he got from the bear's huggin' and squeezin', and all that time Miss Davidson she sat beside the bed pertendin' she was a nursin' of him, but she never let up a jumpin' on him fer thinkin' that the bear was her, till finally, he jest gave in and agreed to marry her to stop her talkin', which he did shortly arterwards and now they're livin' quiet and contented together and all on account of that there bear."

"That story," said Keene, "whatever else it is, has the indelible mark of truth upon it. I would have liked, however, to hear the bear's side of the story." They had now been walking between three and four hours, when, presently, with a change of the wind, came the distant sound of falling or rushing water. Keene called the old man's attention to it, and asked what it was.

"That's where the first rapids begin," he answered. "Ye see, the creek takes a fall, from

hereabouts on, of about five hundred feet before it gets to Glendale; and that's what makes boatin' of it so mighty onpleasant-like. It's nuthin' here, howsoever, to what 'tis in the Devil's Gorge. The gorge is about three miles long, and the water comes out of it a matter of three hundred feet lower than where it goes in. Ye're to follow this gorge down on the left-hand side, and when ye get down to the bottom, it's plain sailin', followin' the creek to Glendale."

"But how do you descend this gorge?

must be sort of rough walking," objected Keene. "Sort of rough in spots like, but ye'll have no trouble. Sometimes yew keep in the woods above the cut, and sometimes yew follow the side of the creek at the bottom of it, but ye're all right ef ye take the left-hand side. Yew couldn't go down the right-hand side ef ye tried. The farther ye go the harder and rougher it gets, till ye find yourself up stump and can go no further, and like enough ye can't get back again. It's a perilous, craggy place, that righthand side, and yew don't want to try it, unless ye've got wings, which it doesn't appear ye hev."
"Well, you take me as far as the gorge, Nate,

and I will risk the rest of it."

"Can't do it," responded the old man, shortly. "Can't do it? and why not?" queried Keene, astonished.

"Because it's not accordin' to contract. It's three miles farther than I allowed to go. We're ten miles from the lake now, and I was to take

ye twelve. When I leave ye, we'll be a matter of two miles and a half from the head of the cut, and ye've only to keep alongside of the creek

and ye'll get there easy enough."

Keene thought of arguing the matter further with the guide, but he seemed so doggedly obstinate in the position which he had taken that he wisely concluded that it would be of no use. Then again, the old man had a tramp before him of twelve miles back to the lake, and a row of fifteen miles or so before he regained the camp, all to be accomplished before midnight; so he did not feel like insisting on his guidance any longer than was absolutely necessary. He therefore held his peace and trudged along after Nate about an hour longer, when all at once the waters of the creek again broke into view, and the guide halted.

"Waal, we're here at last," announced that

worthy.

"Yes, we're here; there's no doubt about that. But here isn't Glendale, and the question is to get from here to there; but I think that I will have no difficulty in following your directions, so hand me over my traps, and, after resting for a few minutes, I'll set out on my exploring expedition."

"I wouldn't waste much time in restin' ef I were yew, young man! Ye've got some rough ground to get over yet, and it's time to rest when ye get to Glendale. Es for me, I must be goin',

so good-by, and good luck to ye!"

Saying this, Nate gave Keene a hearty grasp of the hand, and turning, commenced immediately to retrace his steps through the forest, with the same tireless, swinging stride with which he had first set out from the lake.

Keene was somewhat disconcerted at the unceremoniousness of the old man's departure, and astonished to see him dispense with even a few moments' repose, and start out on his homeward journey apparently as fresh as when he had first left the boat. At the same time, the guide's admonition recurred to his mind, and he rose and turned resolutely to the task before him.

The creek now had become somewhat wider and deeper than it was where it left the lake, owing to the inflowing of several small tributary streams. The young man was travelling along the right-hand side of the stream, and the thought now struck him for the first time that in order to follow out the injunctions of the guide, and descend the gorge on the left-hand side, it would be first necessary to cross the creek; a very difficult undertaking, inasmuch as it was some forty feet wide and the current very deep and strong. He reasoned, however, that if the guide had directed him to take the left-hand side, there must be some point, before he reached the gorge, where the creek was fordable.

It turned out as he had thought. After following the torrent for about a mile he came to

a place where the bed of the water-course had widened out to such an extent that the water was shallow enough to wade, and a few moments more found him on the left-hand instead of the

right-hand side of Otter Creek.

Half an hour more brought him to what he supposed the commencement of the gorge. The banks of the stream, which for some time had assumed a rocky character, now commenced to rise more and more above the surface of the water. The creek had become more swift and violent, owing to the rapid descent which it was making. Its bed was filled with immense boulders, over and around which the great volume of water dashed with tremendous violence, sending its spray high into the air and covering the whole vicinity with moisture. At first he had no trouble in following the course of the stream, sometimes picking his way along the bed of the creek by the side of the water, leaping from stone to stone; and sometimes keeping upon the rocks above the water-course; but very soon it became more difficult. The crags on either side rose gradually, or, rather, the bed of the torrent sank, until on either side there was raised a cliff or wall of limestone almost a hundred feet in height, and he knew that he was now in earnest within the Devil's Gorge or Cañon.

His journey grew more difficult with each step that he took. He had lately been following a very poor path, which skirted the summit of the cliff. This path at length deviated and took a somewhat downward direction, and he now found himself creeping along a sort of ledge which was thirty or forty feet below the summit of the crags and at least one hundred feet above the boiling flood which seethed and foamed along at the bottom of the abyss. The ledge which he was treading grew momentarily more narrow, and now and then showed great fissures, the passing of which required the utmost coolness of which he was possessed. Finally, however, he came to a point from which farther progress seemed impossible, and he stopped to take breath and look around him.

Nothing could be more wild and magnificent than the view which his position commanded. The gorge was perhaps two hundred feet wide at that point, and on either side the jagged, uneven cliffs arose like walls to the height of a hundred and fifty feet at least. Their summits again were crested with forest of pine and hemlock, which arose eighty or a hundred feet higher, and the sky above seemed a long blue strip between the forest tops. A hundred feet below him beat and thundered and foamed the voluminous torrent, now twisted and contorted into curious shapes of white glistening foam, and now stretching along in deep, dark, ominous pools.

He glanced over at the farther side of the canon. Down at the bottom there seemed a strip of dry land between the flood and the walls

of the cliff, along which he might have walked with safety. He had noticed several times that the farther or right-hand side seemed much the safer and more accessible, and he now began to wonder whether he had followed rightly the directions of old Nate. He had surely said the left-hand side. As this thought passed through Keene's mind, something else flashed suddenly before his imagination. On the night before, the old man had said that he had drawn the boat up on the right-hand side of the large boulder which lay upon the shore of the lake near their camp, and he had meant the left-hand side. Nate had made this mistake once or twice before during their stay in the woods. The truth came to him like lightning. The guide did not know his right hand from his left, and by following his directions he had taken the wrong side of the gorge and had got himself into what might be called a very serious predicament.

Now, Keene was a very sensible, reasonable fellow usually, but, at the same time, he had a certain obstinacy of character which often led him to persevere in certain lines of action, even after he found that the direction he had taken was not the best one; a sort of a desire to make right out of wrong; and this tendency in his nature was very unfortunate for him at the present time. He knew well enough that he was on the wrong side of the gorge. He had heard Nate say that it was impossible to

descend it on this side, and he knew that it was not yet too late to turn back, but the very idea of turning back was opposed to the chief characteristic of his nature, and he inwardly resolved to descend the gorge on that side at all hazards.

He saw that there was a projecting ledge of rock which skirted the cliff some twenty feet higher than the point upon which he stood, and imagined that if he could once gain this ledge his task would be easier. It was a very difficult and hazardous undertaking. There were a few stunted hemlock-bushes clinging to the cliff, and one or two points of vantage in the rock itself, upon which he might rest his foot or grasp with his hand, and after herculean effort he at last succeeded in reaching the higher elevation. He then followed the narrow and insecure path which the ledge afforded for about sixty feet, and passing around a projecting angle of the cliff, found, to his dismay, that further progress was next to impossible. The projecting ledge continued, it is true, along the wall of the gorge, but directly at his feet yawned a fissure or crevasse which extended into the bowels of the mountain, the bottom of it being seventy-five feet below him, and extending in height to the top of the cliff. How far this smaller gorge or opening stretched into the hills he could not see, as, at a small distance from its mouth, its direction changed; but it must have been some distance, as there was at the bottom of it a goodly-sized stream, which shot down in a feathery waterfall into

the waters of the Devil's Gorge.

He now retraced his steps to the commencement of this particular ledge, with the idea of descending to the point from which he had climbed, but going down was a very different thing from coming up, and he had to acknowledge to himself that the thought was madness. Any ordinary man would have weakened at this point in the proceedings, but Keene was not an ordinary man. His nerve and energy were of the kind that rise to the occasion. He once more paced the narrow foot-path, until he arrived at the fissure in the rock, and set to work calculating the chances of being able to clear the chasm with a spring.

A running jump would have been an easy matter, but the narrowness of the ledge upon which he stood put it out of the question; neither did he have the free scope for a square stand-up jump. As an offset to this, however, he saw that if he missed the opposite ledge, he could at least grasp it with his hands and elbows and let himself down upon a small jutting platform of stone, some eight feet below it, from which in some way he could eventually climb

to the wished-for path.

He nerved himself for a moment, felt his pulse to see if he were cool, carefully took his position opposite the objective point, counted ten, and jumped.

Somehow he had miscalculated matters.

Perhaps the ledges were not on exactly the same level; perhaps the distance was greater than he imagined. At any rate, his breast struck against the opposite cliff. It was a terrible blow, and knocked the breath entirely out of him; at the same time, his hands clutched upon the rough upper surface of this ledge; his nails fairly dug into the stone. He was conscious of making one convulsive effort to hold himself in the right position so that he would drop upon the projecting platform below the ledge. He was conscious of a dull thud, as of a heavy object falling upon the rock, and then his senses seemed to have left him, for he beheld standing before him, not ten paces away, and looking at him, the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, or had ever imagined in all his life.

"The Gray Ghost Girl of the Cliffs!"

ejaculated he.

### CHAPTER III

### A VOTARY OF DIANA

"Say nothing, and do just as I tell you. In the first place, keep perfectly quiet and look right at me all the time."

No, he was certainly not out of his senses. This was no apparition, no creation of a benumbed and bewildered brain. There stood the girl right before him, and it was certainly she who had just spoken. These were the thoughts of the youth who, having pulled himself together, assumed a half-sitting attitude on the narrow projection upon which he had fallen and rubbed his eyes to assure himself that he was not dreaming.

"You are very lucky to have fallen as you There is no danger as long as you do not move; neither must you look down lest you be-

come dizzy."

Keene now realized that the speaker stood opposite him, upon a jutting ledge or projection which skirted the other side of the narrow chasm which he had tried to leap. Her position was such that she must have been standing almost directly under him when he had made the unfortunate jump, and, on account of the shelving nature of the cliff, she had been hidden from his view until now.

The ledge or path upon which she stood continued on up into the fissure as far as he was able to see, which, on account of the winding nature of the crevasse, was not very far. It must have been eight or ten feet under the point from which he had sprung and about on a level with the projection upon which he now found himself.

In appearance she was as singular as she was beautiful, and any one, on seeing her under such circumstances as Keene did, would have been struck dumb with astonishment, and would have remembered the apparition vividly to the

last day of his life.

She was of medium height, which, for a woman, is about five feet four inches. Her form was somewhat slender, but with rounded lines; lines which at the same time had something in them of agility and vigor. Her costume was bizarre in the extreme. She wore a very tightfitting gray corduroy jacket and a plain short skirt of the same material, which descended to the tips of a trim pair of russet shoes. Her small waist was belted tightly in with a russet strap and a large silver buckle. A little gray velvet cap with a gray feather was perched jauntily in the midst of her brown curly locks; and slung by another strap, which passed around her shoulders, was a very diminutive singlebarrelled fowling-piece.

The young man followed her instructions, as to looking at her and at nothing else, to the

letter, and inwardly made up his mind that it was quite an easy and certainly a very pleasant thing to do; and all the time it seemed to him that there must be some mistake about it after all, for how on earth could she have got where she was unless she was something not of flesh and blood, but of the stuff that dreams are made of. She was certainly very different from any girl he had ever seen before, at least in the western hemisphere. Nothing could be prettier than the shape of her round white neck, of her little head, or, in fact, of her every feature. Her skin was ivory-hued and smooth and flushed with the glow of health; her little nose was aquiline, her mouth like a cupid's bow, her eyebrows black and somewhat heavy, and her dark eyes expressive, large, and grave. He had seen some such faces, though not as beautiful, in the fanciful creations of the painter's brush, and the presence here in the forests of the Adirondacks, of a creature so fantastic, so witch-like, was an anomaly which puzzled him to the last degree.

She was evidently filled with concern at the seriousness of the position of this very good-looking young man, who had dropped down, as it were, out of the clouds, almost at her very feet. It was her particular business to save him, and he could see that she was revolving in her mind the means of doing so. She went some distance along the path which wound along the side of the fissure, turning her head now and

then to see that Keene was following her directions. She looked anxiously in the direction of the head of this smaller gorge, then she came slowly back, seemingly lost in reflection.

"If I could only make Roberts hear," she thought aloud; "but it is too far, and I dare not go after him and leave the man alone in

such a perilous position."

Just then she caught sight of the trunk of a pine-tree which had been swept down the fissure by some great flood of former years, and which had lodged upon the ledge upon which she was standing. It seemed to be firmly bedded or wedged in the angle formed by the level of the ledge and the impending stratum of rock. It was perhaps twenty-five feet in length and nine inches in diameter at the larger end. As she caught sight of this her face lighted. She went to the smaller end of the stick and essayed to move it, but failed. Then she took her breechloader, shoved the barrel between the timber and the rock and pried, with the effect of starting it away from its bed several inches. She continued this operation until the small end of the tree projected several feet over the abyss towards the spot where Keene sat huddled up against the cliff. The larger end still kept its place, firmly bedded between the rocks, and it was plain to be seen that if the butt of the trunk would hold its position, with a little more prying the small end would swing over until the tree formed a bridge over the chasm.

The young man watched her, as may well be thought, with the most fixed attention, and yet it did not seem to him as if he were himself personally interested in the matter. It was not his own safety which engrossed his mind so much as the picture which he was enjoying of a very pretty and graceful young woman performing, in a very skilful and vigorous way, a delicate and hazardous piece of engineering.

She presently paused in her work and looked over at him, smiling as if to reassure him, and he noticed that the smile brought a dimple to one of her smooth, rose-tinted cheeks, the left

one.

"You see, there will be no trouble about it. It all depends upon you. You must be cool

and not move until I tell you."

Saying this, she resumed her operations with such success that the smaller end of the pine stick now projected over to within two feet of Keene. It now began to sag, however, a good deal. He lay down on the rock, reached out, and, grasping the end of the tree, brought it around until it rested upon the rock where he lay. He moved it this way and that to see if it were likely to turn around under his weight; then he arose, and suddenly, before she had any idea of his intention, he stepped lightly upon the fragile bridge, took three or four strides like those of a rope-walker, and was at her side.

She slipped down and sat upon the trunk, her head sank upon her breast, she swayed once or twice, and seemed as if about to faint. He caught her by the shoulders to prevent her from falling, but she was out of it in a moment, and rising, said:

"I am ashamed of myself. I do not know what has come over me, but I think it was your rushing across the trunk in such a reckless and

foolhardy manner."

"No; it is because you have done a great and brave thing. You have exposed yourself to grave danger and have performed almost a miracle to save the life of a perfect stranger. Your nerves and your faculties were at such a tension that, when it was all through, something had to give way with the reaction. I won't try to thank you, because I couldn't put it into words, and I know very well that a girl with a heart and an energy like yours can dispense with mere thanks, but you can rest assured that I realize fully what you have done."

"Well, we have talked enough about it," replied the girl, in what now seemed to Keene a rather cold and conventional manner. "You are, I believe, the first person who ever attained the spot where we stand from yonder direction, and, if I have my way about it, you will be the

last."

Saying this, she began to pry upon the fast end of the timber with such strength and will that in a moment or two it was dislodged from the place where it was wedged. One or two more applications of the gun-barrel brought it to the edge of the cliff. It rolled over, trembled for an instant on the brink, and dashed headlong into the abyss. One end of it struck the bottom of the smaller chasm, then, rebounding, over it went and down, down into the great gorge, striking upon the rock, a hundred feet or more below, with a great crash, and floated away in the black waters of the flood.

Keene instinctively imagined himself in the place of the piece of timber, and shuddered a little as he thought of the imminent danger from which he had escaped. The good fairy who had rescued him stood regarding her toy-like firearm, which had been very much damaged by the use to which it had been put, the barrel being bent and choked with earth and rock. There was something in her manner which made it appear as if she were secretly embarrassed; as if, now that she had rescued the youth who stood before her, she did not exactly know what to do with him. A cloud had gathered upon her brow which was evidently not caused by the condition of her weapon.

"Sir," she said, at length, "I did what I did because it had to be done; but, if I could have helped you in any other way than bringing you

here, I would have done so."

He was surprised at the substance of what she said and at her manner of saying it. "If my fair preserver regrets what she has done," he replied, with a touch of levity in his voice, "perhaps it would be better for me to release her of my presence by jumping after that stick down there?"

"Now, please do not talk foolishly, but listen to me. As I said before, I have my reasons for regretting that you are here; in fact, it is a misfortune for me and perhaps for others. It is late, the night will be down in a short space of time, and you will not be able, before dark, to reach any habitation which you know about. I propose to offer you shelter for the night. Now that you are here, there is only one way of egress, and before you get away from this place you will necessarily be in possession of a secret which has always been zealously guarded. It is because you must know the secret anyway that I find it advisable to give you lodging for the night. I do not claim to have secured any rights upon you by what I have already done. What I am about to ask is a favor, and I ask it because I presuppose you to be an honorable and chivalrous gentleman."

"There is nothing in the world that you can ask of me in vain," replied the young man, enthusiastically. You do not know how glad I will be to have you ask me, to know that there is something in which I can be of service to you."

"Oh, it is a very simple thing," said she, smiling faintly at his earnestness, and again showing the dimple in her left cheek. "It is this: you will promise me, on your honor as a man and by everything that you hold sacred in the world, that you will never divulge to any one living

what you see and hear from this time until you leave this place to-morrow morning; that you will never seek to return to the place where you lodge to-night; that you will ask no questions of any one you meet there; that you will strive to forget the very fact of its existence. Do you promise?"

Keene took her hand in his and, giving it a slight pressure, and looking her solemnly in the eyes, said, in a grave voice, "I am not in the habit of breaking my word, and I promise. I suppose, however, that you do not mean, in exacting this promise, that we are never to meet

again."

"And why should we wish to meet again?" asked she with another recurrence of the dimple.

"If I were to tell you all the reasons why we should meet again, it would take as many words as are contained in a three hundred page modern novel. There is every reason why we should meet again and no reason at all why we should not. I warn you now that I shall take every means possible to see you once more, that is to say every means which are compatible with the promise I have given you."

"And what are some of these reasons, if I

may ask?" said she saucily.

"I haven't known you long enough to tell you some of the more cogent reasons why I want to continue your acquaintance, but, as I look at you the number of them keeps on increasing."

"You are certainly looking at me as if you

wished to gather a large stock of them," said she quizzically. "However, you may meet me again in a very few days or hours; in fact, I think that such a meeting is altogether likely. If you do see me again, recollect that you are not to show that you have met me before and you are not to refer, in any manner whatever, to this place or to anything which may happen here."

"I will promise you that gladly," said he,

with becoming meekness.

"I believe you," answered the charming girl, simply, "and now come."

She passed before him, along the ledge which skirted the chasm. As they advanced, it began to grow wider and the walking became easier. After sixty or seventy feet, they turned an angle of the cliff, and he could now see that the fissure grew very much larger and wider as it went inward, and after a hundred feet or so from its mouth, instead of being eight or ten feet in width, it was forty or fifty, and constantly growing more spacious. The ledge upon which they walked seemed rather cut out by the hand of man than fashioned by nature, and was now a constantly-widening path or plateau. It now occurred to Keene that, in the excitement and the emotions which succeeded his escape from the danger which threatened him, he had neglected to find out the name of his beautiful and singular benefactress, but that was easily explained, for she had burst upon his view in such a mysterious and supernatural manner that he had not put the commonplace question to himself as to whether she had any name at all. Now, however, that he saw that she was a creature of flesh and blood, he felt that he must know her name; and after casting about within himself for the means of getting the desired information, he concluded finally to wait until the evening, or until they arrived at the place of shelter which she had promised him, before propounding the inquiry.

All this time his guiding angel, for so she appeared to him, passed quickly along in front of him, her eyes cast down, and seemingly lost in the contemplation of some serious problem which required all her attention. They had ascended the chasm or fissure some two or three hundred feet above its opening into the Devil's Gorge, when, all at once, it made another turn to the right, and, coming around the angle formed by the jutting limestone, a curious sight met his view. The gorge here widened to a cliff-encircled basin a hundred feet in diameter. On the left-hand side, some fifty feet below the summit of the cliffs, the ledge which they followed was widened out to a breadth of eighty feet or more, and the young man now saw that it had been formed by excavating the rock from the top downward. In other words, that it was the site of an old abandoned stone-quarry. Above this artificial plateau impended a wall of clean-cut limestone, jutting out at its summit, fully twenty-five feet beyond its base, and in the hollow so formed stood a curiously-shaped solid, and rather capacious cottage, built mostly of the large square boulders of limestone which had come from the quarry, and almost entirely hidden from view under the shelving rocks of the cliff.

The summits of the precipice were fringed around with an almost impenetrable forest of pines and undergrowth. It would have been impossible for any persons exploring these mountain wilds to come very near the edge of the cliff; and even if they did so, it was a question whether they might even then perceive this mysterious dwelling, so cunningly was it hidden in the recesses of the crags, and behind the second growth of hemlock and pine which had grown up in front of it on the plateau itself. The roof of the house was covered with shingles which had become moss-covered and green with age; the stone walls were stained with time and weather, and the oaken doors and timbers were blackened with exposure. Taking it all in all, nothing could be imagined more picturesque and home-like than this forest- and crag-hidden cottage.

Keene saw at once that this was the secret of which his nymph-like conductor had spoken, and a secret in truth it was, since the cottage could only be seen or approached from two directions,—either from the head of the ravine, or from the direction in which he himself had come. It was not likely that it would ever again be approached by a stranger in the latter way.

and he came to the conclusion that, if the other outlet or pass to this enchanted spot were as difficult as the one he had taken, the place was as secure from intrusion almost as if it had been in the moon.

"There is the house where you are to stop," said she, halting at some distance from the dwelling. "I will arrange it that some one will guide you on your way in the morning. Remember your promise; and now, wait for me here

until I prepare them for your coming."

Saying this, she left him and approached the curious edifice. When she was within a few feet of the entrance, there appeared in the porch a man of rough but honest exterior, clad in the garb of a guide or woodsman of the better class. He appeared to be fifty years of age, and had the air of a servant rather than of an equal. He at once perceived Keene standing at a distance, and his manner showed that he was immeasurably astonished at his presence upon the plateau.

The young woman came up to him and talked to him some moments in a low voice. The man listened to her in a deferential, respectful manner, as he would have done if she had been his mistress; then she turned and beckoned to Keene,

who came forward and joined them.

As he did so he got a better view of the cottage. As was before mentioned, it was built solidly and for the most part of great square blocks taken from the quarry itself. These blocks were covered with moss, which made it

seem that the house had been erected for some time. The building was built immediately against the cliff, and it looked as if the solid rock itself had been used for the back wall of the house. It was about twenty feet in depth, and extended along the base of the cliff some sixty feet or more. The roof was of common shingles, moss-grown like the mason-work, and was like one side of a common gable roof, slanting down and outward from the walls of the cliff. The house seemed to consist of one story and an attic, and the porch at which stood the lady and the woodsman was situated in the center of the façade, flanked on either side by four large windows with very small panes. To conclude, the whole affair had an air of solidity and respectability which assorted with its singular and peculiar shape and its mysteriously isolated and hidden position.

"Mr. Keene," spoke up the young lady, as the young man joined them, "I have told Roberts of your unfortunate adventure, and explained your presence here. He will look to your wants and see that you have supper and a comfortable lodging, of which, to judge from what you have gone through with, you must stand in considerable need. Roberts, take him into the oak chamber and do everything for his comfort."

"Any directions which you give, my young lady, shall be followed to the letter. Will you

follow me, sir?" said the man, turning towards

the youth.

Keene prepared to follow him into the porch. He had been struck dumb with amazement at hearing himself addressed by name by the fair unknown, but it was only one of many surprises which he had experienced in the half hour just passed, and he was getting used to them. As he was about to pass within the door, he turned to where she had stood, in order to thank her again for all she had done, and behold! she had vanished from the spot where he had seen her a moment before, as completely as if she had melted into air.

He stared and rubbed his eyes before he

could convince himself that he saw aright.

"Where is the lady?" he demanded of Roberts, who had paused and was awaiting him in the passage. "Does she not live here? and who in Heaven's name is she?"

"I think it will rain before morning," answered Roberts, in a measured voice, as if he

had not heard the question.

## CHAPTER IV

## Voices of the Night

Roberts and the guest turned to the right, after entering the passage, and passed into a spacious and pleasant apartment, which was comfortably and, in some respects, richly furnished. It was finished massively and plainly in some sort of soft wood, the ceiling was of oiled pine, and a large, handsome, wroughtiron lamp hung from the center. The floor was covered with two or three thick Oriental rugs, upon which were placed several large, heavy, and comfortably-upholstered chairs and lounges of different shapes, all of which showed the marks of many years' usage. The room contained two spacious hanging book-shelves, and the rest of the space upon the walls was taken up with several curious old engravings, a number of excellent landscapes, in oil and water colors, and a score or more of antique firearms and edged weapons. Keene examined the paintings and found that they all had for a subject the glen, the cottage and the surrounding forest, and that they gave evidence of a skill far beyond the ordinary.

Roberts passed through and opened a door

at the farther end of this apartment.

"Here," said he, "is your chamber. You

will find everything necessary for your comfort. The diningroom opens on the other side of the passage. I will tell Lisbeth to get supper, and

will let you know when it is ready."

Keene stepped forward and entered the chamber with Roberts. The latter went about the room, inspecting the different articles which were necessary for the comfort of his guest, to see if they were all in their places, and then prepared to retire. The young man, who had taken his seat upon a chair by the window in a state of complete bewilderment, was again on the point of questioning the man, notwithstanding the way in which his former question had been answered, when the admonition of the beautiful Amazon occurred to him and he held his peace.

Roberts who had now finished his inspection, went out, pausing a moment on the threshold

to say:

"I think that you will find everything here that you need. If you do not, you will speak to me or Lisbeth about it, as the directions of the mistress were that everything should be done

for your comfort."

Arthur thanked him for his courtesy and, as the door closed after him, proceeded to meditate upon the extraordinary adventure which had befallen him; the singular apparition of the lady herself at such an hour, in such a dress, in such a wild and inaccessible spot; her strange manner while he had been with her; the inex-

plicable way in which she had vanished as he was about to enter the house; the promise which he had been obliged to make before she had revealed the secret of the dwelling, and the mysterious situation and character of the house itself and of everything which it contained. The whole thing seemed so dream-like, so intangible, so out of all rhyme and reason, that he was upon the point, several times, of pinching himself to see whether, after all, he was not dreaming the whole thing.

He now recalled to mind the tales of the old guide about the gray ghost of the gorge, and the strange lights which had been flickering to and fro along the face of the cliff. The gray ghost was undoubtedly the little huntress. Passers by had, now and then, caught glimpses of her as she stood upon the ledge at the mouth of the smaller ravine. It must also have been she who had been responsible for the will-o'-the-wisp lights which had so astonished Nate

Sawyer.

This girl had affected him in a strange manner. She had produced a profound impression upon him. He was fascinated and obsessed by her image, which remained vivid and lifelike before his mental vision. He smiled as he thought of his growing interest in her and he asked himself if he could already be falling in love with this charming nymph of the woodland.

The chamber in which he found himself was very prettily and tastefully arranged, and

seemed rather to have been decorated and furnished for a feminine than a masculine occupant. The pictures upon the walls, the delicate and fanciful character of the furniture and of the ornaments, together with the presence of a score of trifling feminine knick-knacks, and of two or three daintily-bound romantic books, bespoke the former presence there of some refined and educated woman, and he imagined that it might be the one particular chamber of the unknown huntress who had brought him thither.

His toilet was soon made, and, while waiting the summons to supper, he strolled into the adjoining room and examined the different objects which it contained, which he had not

noticed on passing through it before.

As he had been a great reader and was a natural lover of books, his first attention was given to the book-shelves. They did not contain many volumes, perhaps a hundred all told, but he was surprised at their unexceptional excellence, at their wide variety, and at the learning and taste which their possession implied in their owner; and he said to himself that it was not the library of a young and romantic girl, neither could it appertain to the man Roberts, who, though he had spoken in a sensible and grammatical manner, nevertheless had shown, in their talk of a few minutes, a certain simplicity and rusticity of speech which the owner of these well-worn books would not have had.

There were books in several languages: Boccaccio and Tasso, Goethe and Heine, Moliere and Le Sage, and Rabelais, Cervantes, and Calderon, side by side with Shakespeare and Burton, with John Bunyan, Butler, and Dean Swift. The owner of the books was evidently fond of romance, as well as of humor and of satire, which fact was shown by the presence of the works of several of the great English poets, and of two or three of the greatest of English novelists, like Scott and Thackeray.

There is no index to a person's character and life like his books taken altogether. Here was evidently a collection of a hundred of the best books in the world, according to the owner's idea. It was no indiscriminate collection, brought together by chance, but showed that it had been chosen seriously by one individual, as one would choose out a few friends for constant

companionship.

Thus the young man mused, and he began to create out of his own fancy, as he glanced from volume to volume, the character and even the appearance of their owner, with his several traits, both bodily and mental, his situation in the world, and all his history, when suddenly he was interrupted in this pleasing occupation by the opening of the door which led into the passage, the same by which he had just entered with Roberts, and the appearance in it of a plain, tidy, oldish-looking woman, dressed primly in a dark gingham dress and wearing

a spotless white apron and an equally spotless white cap, who courtesied and said:

"Beg pardon, sir, but your supper is served,

sir."

She preceded Arthur into the passageway and, opening the opposite door, showed him into the dining-room of the house. The young man followed her, full of expectation of at length meeting the mysterious young lady again. It is needless to say that his thoughts had been almost exclusively of her since he had entered the dwelling; but now, upon entering the room where the evening meal was spread, he was doomed to disappointment. The table was laid for two persons, it is true, but his companion, whoever it was to be, had not put in an appearance.

This apartment, like the other, showed signs of the cultivated taste of the owner. The table and the great sideboard and the old-fashioned chairs with their legs carved to represent the claws of birds or animals, were of polished mahogany, which had become almost black with age. There was a wealth of curiously antique silverware and fantastic, delicately-cut glass upon the table and the sideboard. The linen was like snow and of the finest texture, and there were several portraits, faded and blurred with

time, hung around the room.

Keene took the place which Lisbeth designated as his, and while she came and went, or stood behind his chair during the course of the

meal, he would often look up, as some slight noise as of a footstep sounded in the adjacent part of the house, expecting that the fair unknown would enter and take the place opposite him, but he waited in vain, as the meal progressed to its conclusion and she came not.

He had ventured to address a few commonplace remarks to the respectable and gray-haired woman who served him, upon the merits of the different viands with which he was served, and upon several other trivial topics, to all of which she had replied in a respectful, non-committal, and concise manner. The admonitions of the young girl were fresh in his mind, but the mystery of the vacant seat opposite his own was at length too much for him, and he ventured the observation:

"From the cloth being laid for two I supposed I was to have company, but, from present appearances, it looks as if I should have to eat alone."

Lisbeth went about her business apparently unconcerned at this remark, and the young man continued:

"Something must have occurred to detain her, is it not so?"

"I do not know," replied Lisbeth, calmly. "Had I not better wait until she comes?"

"She is not coming to-night, sir."

"But you evidently expected her, since her place at the table has been prepared," ventured Arthur.

"It is not for her," answered the aged waitress, who immediately began to busy herself with the china and silver, making rather more clatter than necessary, as though she would inform him by that means that the conversation should end there.

There was nothing for the young man to do but to keep silence. The question was upon his lips, "For whom is it, then, if not for her?" but he remembered his promise, and held his tongue.

The supper itself was perfect. He had been used up by his long tramp and his exertions, and was frightfully hungry. The hardest fare would have been welcome to him, and here he was served with the choicest of eatables, which, though simple, were cooked as he would have found them at the Trois Frères Provençeaux, and served with exquisite neatness and taste. The trout were done to a turn and seasoned to a nicety; the salad was like an epicure's dream, and the coffee had an aroma and taste which were perfection. There was only one thing which marred its enjoyment, and that was the absence of his nameless and beautiful hostess.

It was dark when Keene finished his meal, and his watch showed him that it was some minutes past nine o'clock. Lisbeth preceded him into the library and lighted the lamp. She then lighted the candles in the silver candelabrum which stood upon a small cabinet in his chamber, and, returning into the passageway, closed the door after her, and the young man was left alone.

He now noticed, what he had before overlooked, a small miniature of a woman which hung in a corner of the library. He at once recognized the charming features of his little huntress. There were the same large, dark, expressive eyes, the small shell-like ears, the mischievously-arched mouth, the rose tinted ivory color, and the dimple in the left cheek; but somehow the face, though every feature was there, seemed changed. The painter had not caught the true expression. It was she, and yet it was not she.

The excitement and action of the day now began to have their full effect upon the young man, and he felt a degree of lassitude and drowsiness seldom before experienced; so, retiring into his room, he closed the door, and, after disrobing himself and extinguishing the tapers, he flung himself upon the couch, and with his last waking thoughts fixed upon the fair stranger who had been the means of bringing him to this curious though comfortable retreat, he fell into a deep slumber.

It seemed to him that he could have slept not more than half an hour, when he was awakened by the closing of a door. He listened for a moment, and hearing nothing more, was dozing off again, when all at once came the sound of voices as though several persons were in conversation. He arose and, partially clothing himself, opened the door into the library. All was quiet there, and the lamp, which was burning when he retired, had been extinguished. The voices now sounded clearer, and it was evident that the sound proceeded from the dining-room. He was filled with the idea that the young mistress of the house had returned, and, wishing to assure himself that such was the fact and resolving to retire immediately if the conversation were such that it would not be honorable to listen, he went to the door leading into the passage, tried it, and, to his surprise, found that it had been locked or bolted from the outside. It was certainly not done with the idea of making him a prisoner, as he could easily escape through the windows, one of which he now noticed was open. It could only have been done with the idea of keeping him from the passageway, and consequently from the other side of the house. Thus he reasoned, and it made the mystery which overshadowed the place seem deeper and more perplexing.

He now caught the sounds of the voices, or rather the voice, for there was now but one, and that a musical, grave, baritone, more clearly. The person who owned it semed to be declaiming or reading aloud. Keene was a man of honor, but some hidden instinct told him that there was no harm in listening here, and his decision was right, for, after a few sentences of the reader, the young man perceived that he was reading that beautiful and charming story by Washington Irving: "The Student of Salamanca." He was now about half through the

narrative, and before the eavesdropper was aware of it, he was so interested in the doings of the student, the old alchemist, and his pretty daughter that he forgot everything else in his anxiety to hear the conclusion of the tale. He had read it more than once, but now there was something so magnetic in that deep, manly voice, as it expressed, in different cadences and inflections, the love, the happiness, the mad ambition, the misfortunes, the sorrows, and the ultimate triumph of the three actors in the scene, that he now, for the first time, realized the unequalled beauty of the narrative.

At its conclusion there was a silence of several moments, as though the reader's hearers were very much impressed, then several remarks were made about the story, and among the voices Arthur easily distinguished those of Roberts and Lisbeth, and also that of the reader, who pointed out, in well-chosen language, in a few sentences, the principal points of beauty and the moral of the tale. He listened anxiously for the voice

of the young lady, but listened in vain.

"Sir," now spoke the old serving woman, "that story is surely very beautiful, but you promised to-night to read us something of your own writing. I would like for myself one of those simple, sad poems which tell about dear old forgotten things. There is one which you have read to us before. You called it 'The Haunted House.' Will you not read it again to us to-night?"

After a pause, the reader, as if in answer to Lisbeth's request, recited the following:

"Rusty, worn, and stained by wind and weather, Still the same, through all the year's swift change, Long has stood a homely, gabled dwelling,

Silent, dark, and strange;

Seeming lost, o'er shadowed and forgotten,

In the busy street,
But 'tis filled with bright and quaint illusions,
Hallowed by sweet faces long since vanished,
Haunted by the tread of unseen feet."

"He who lives there, careworn, gray, and lonely, He who loves its melancholy gloom,

Sometimes hears the noise of children romping

In some distant room—

Merry ghosts of hide-and-seek, whose voices

Lead him on, until
Something tells him they are but the phantoms
Of his childish hopes and creeds;—then swiftly
They have fled, and all again is still."

"From his mid-day reveries he is startled By a fair ghost, from an old romance, With a merry laugh, a slender figure, And a roguish glance.

Was it all a dream? but look! the curtain Trembles still, ah! well!
'Tis not true, for her sweet voice is silent, She has long been sleeping in that palace

Where no knight can come to break the spell."

"There's a whispering in the embrasured casement, When the dusk comes and the night winds sigh; 'Gainst the panes a little group seems shadowed, Ghosts of long gone by, When the mother called her children round her,
Held them close, and told
Stories of the stars and of the fairies,—
Magic stories, which, in childhood's kingdom,
Change the earth—the very hours—to gold."

"But at midnight, when the street is silent, And the firelight floats upon the walls, Quickly all is changed, a bright enchantment

On the old house falls;

Bringing back the beauty and affection

Of the golden years,
Bringing back the perfumes and the music,
Bringing back the faces and the voices

Bringing back the faces and the voices, Bringing back the smiles without the tears."

Now, after some moments, came the voice again, this time it said, "We will read the thirty-first Psalm."

There was a pause, broken by the rustling of leaves, and he commenced to read, this time with a more solemn and tender intonation. When he read the stanza commencing, "For thou art my rock and my fortress," there was an exaltation, a fervor in the voice which showed how deeply the reader was in earnest; and when he read the stanza, "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities," there was a tremor in his expression and a hesitation as though the reader had been touched to the soul by the truth of this text, in its application to himself.

After the psalm came the sound of footsteps, and the opening and closing of doors. The different members of the household were evidently retiring for the night, and Keene, a "sadder and a wiser man," composed himself to slumber. Try as he might, however, sleep would not come to him. The memory of the strange happenings of the afternoon and night kept racing through his brain and effectually dispelled his drowsiness. The moon was shining, and through the open window, he could perceive the outlines of the rocks and trees of the glen almost as plainly as though it had been day. Moved by a sudden impulse, he arose, slipped into his clothing and, letting himself down out of the window, strolled slowly in the direction of the head of the ravine. After walking a few hundred feet he sat down upon a convenient boulder and filled and lighted his pipe. For a quarter hour he sat thus, listening to the music of the leaping stream and to the rustling of the wind in the leaves, watching the phantom-like outlines of the great pine trees, and thinking of the girl whose charms and fascinations had, in such short time, made so great an impression upon him.

At last, feeling a premonition of drowsiness, he arose and set out on his return to the house. When he had come within thirty or forty yards of it, he perceived a human figure come from the door and pass down the glen in the direction of its mouth. Where the figure walked it was half moonlight and half shadow, so that he saw it indistinctly, yet it seemed to him to be

that of a woman. He was filled with curiosity to know why one of the women of the household should be taking a walk in such a dangerous locality at that time of night, and determined to follow in her footsteps. Besides, something might happen to her. It might be the girl and he was anxious for her safety. It occurred to him also that she might be a somnambulist. When he had gained a point, a hundred yards or so below the house, he had reduced the distance between himself and the object of his pursuit to fifty feet. However, she was now walking in the shadow of the overhanging cliffs, so that he could not be certain of her identity. She walked with the elastic tread of a young person, and he was almost certain that it was the girl. Something, however, held him from approaching and accosting her. When she had gained the ledge which overhung the greater gorge, being still in the shadow, she stood quiet for a moment. Then there came the flame of a match, and he saw her light a candle from it. She now began to make passes with the light, up and down and back and forth, and with arc-like sweeps to the left and to the right. She seemed to him to be wigwagging. Yet it was in no code that he was acquainted with. Through the mouth of the ravine he could perceive the forest upon the top of the further side of the Devil's Gorge. From a point in the forest about opposite him he now perceived an answering light. It was moving to the right and left and up and down, in imitation of the woman's signal. Presently both lights disappeared, and Keene, supposing that this female person, whoever she was, would now be setting out upon her return to the house, went off twenty yards to one side of the path, and waited in the shadow of a great tree for her to pass. This she presently did. Strain his vision, however, as he might, he could not make out her face. Her figure seemed young and agile, and it might well be his enchantress, but he could not be sure. Presently too as he followed on, he lost her altogether. She was still some distance from the house when, suddenly, she seemed to disappear. The woman was obscured for a second or two by a passing cloud and, in that instant, she was gone. He passed the spot where he had last seen her, but there was not a nook where she might have hidden.

After standing and pondering the matter, to no avail, for full five minutes, he concluded that his wisest course was to seek his room and go to bed again. This he proceeded to do. After tossing restlessly for many minutes, he went off into a deep slumber which lasted until the morning.

A rap upon his chamber-door awakened him, and the voice of Roberts informed him that it was seven o'clock and that breakfast would

be ready in a few minutes.

The young man arose and went to the window. It had rained since his nocturnal expe-

dition, but now the sun shone brightly and the moisture-laden leaves of the forest glistened like silver. Now, for the first time, he fully saw the romantic and picturesque nature of the glen in which the house stood, and its inaccessible and hidden character.

Hastily clothing himself, he repaired to the library, and was in time to take a long look at the small portrait of the pretty Amazon, before he was summoned to breakfast by Lisbeth. It was almost unnecessary to say that the morning meal was as fresh and appetizing and savory as that which had been given him the evening before. Lisbeth was the same staid, taciturn, respectful servant that she had been, and Keene felt the same temptation to ask questions, and succeeded not one whit better than before in eliciting information.

A few minutes after breakfast, Roberts ap-

peared in the passageway.

"At this time," said he, "my orders were to set out with you towards Glendale; so, if you

are ready, sir, we will begin our walk."

"I am all ready," answered Keene, "and my only regret is that I will not be able to see my host or hostess and tell him or her how grateful I am for the kind hospitality which I have received."

"I will convey your thanks to the owner of

the house," answered Roberts, dryly.

Our hero saw that his ruse was unsuccessful, and that he was not even able to find out from

this Sphinx whether his host was man or woman.

As they passed out upon the porch the fresh breeze caused the door to slam heavily behind them. There was a small, thin, painted board, about eighteen inches long, resting upon the slight projection above the door. The concussion knocked this board from its support, and it fell at their feet. Roberts hastily seized and replaced it as before, but not before Arthur had caught a glimpse of two words painted upon its reverse side. The side which had been, and which now was, hidden against the wall of the house. These two words were "Hearts Rest."

The two men now set out from the house, taking a direction towards the head of the gorge, and opposite to that from which the lady and he had come the night before. While the dwelling was in sight, Keene several times looked back, with a lingering hope of catching one more glimpse of the strange maiden. It was in vain, however, and as Roberts showed by his manner that he noticed it, and that it annoyed him, Keene desisted and followed his guide silently.

A hundred feet or so from the point whence they started there was a turn in the glen and the house passed out of sight. After walking about a furlong upon the same level, the ledge now narrowed to the width of twenty or thirty feet. For the last few minutes the sound of falling water had been borne to Arthur's ears, and on making one more turn, around an angle of the cliff, a graceful feathery cascade burst into his view.

The waterfall was situated at the head of the gorge. Where the stream tumbled into the glen there was a sheer precipitous descent of seventy feet or so, and he began to wonder how

they were to get out of the ravine.

On their way from the house he had noticed nothing but the same unbroken lines of cliff, and he now concluded that if there had been a means of ingress to the gorge, which the presence of the old stone-quarry made to seem possible, it had since been purposely destroyed.

His guide, however, did not seem in any way troubled about the matter, but kept on in silence, and the young man followed him, filled all the while with a burning desire to question him upon a hundred points, but restrained by

his promise from doing so.

Keene now looked back along the route by which they had come and was surprised to see, some two hundred feet away, a man standing upon the edge of the cliff or ledge and fishing in the stream. At first he wondered that he had not seen this man when they passed the place where he stood; however, there were a number of large boulders and stunted cedars between the path and the creek and these had hidden the fisherman from view as they passed him. In the moment that Keene's gaze was permitted to rest upon this individual he saw that he was a man of perhaps thirty years, a strongly built and

gentlemanly youth, with a pointed beard and the well fitting garments of a sportsman. Arthur now came to the conclusion that he was the owner of the mysterious voice which he had

heard in the night.

At length Keene and Roberts arrived at a point immediately beside the fall, and great was his surprise to see Roberts pass out of sight behind it. He made a few steps after him, and found him standing perfectly dry upon a narrow platform immediately behind the cascade. From the platform, some steps, partly natural and partly rough-hewn out of the limestone, ascended to the right. Along the side of these steps extended a chain fastened to iron rings which were let into the rock.

"Take care to step solidly and squarely," said the guide; "the stone is slippery with the

spray."

Saying this, he began to ascend, and Arthur following him, found himself, after he had gone up about twenty feet, upon another platform, from which a stout wooden ladder, with a handrailing reached up to the very top of the gorge, and in a moment more they were both standing upon the cliff.

At the point where they had come out there was a quantity of undergrowth. Coming through this, the young man turned and looked down into the ravine, to inspect the way by which they had come, but was surprised to find that absolutely nothing of the steps or ladder could be

seen. The most of it was, in fact, hidden behind the cascade, and such was the nature of the ground that the latter itself could not have been found, except by an improbable accident. He had noticed, besides, that this ladder had been constructed so that it might be easily removed from below. He wondered greatly that all these precautions should have been taken to render the secret of this mountain retreat so impregnable; and the mystery which hung over the matter became momentarily darker and more unfathomable to his perception.

Roberts was impatient to be gone. "I must be back at nine o'clock," said he, "and we have four good miles to go before we reach the point

where I am to leave you."

With that he struck off with Arthur through the woods, and soon the sound of the cascade had died away and there was nothing to remind the young man of the mysterious gorge and its secret except the presence of his guide, who strode along ahead of him, deigning to look neither to the right nor left.

After proceeding about half a mile, it seemed to him that Roberts had changed the direction in which he was leading him, and that, instead of going west, they were diverging to the south. He asked him if this were not so, but the guide assured him that he was mistaken, that they were still proceeding in the same direction which they had taken when they left the glen, and that the seeming change in the direction was oc-

casioned by the peculiarities of the country

through which they had passed.

He now entered into conversation with Roberts, and found him willing enough to talk, in a laconic way, about matters of general interest, but as soon as the conversation verged upon the subject of the house in the gorge, it was an entirely different matter, and he became as silent as the grave.

The nearest approach which he made in his talk to the forbidden subject was in answer to a question in regard to the fishing in the neighborhood. The young man had asked if good sport might be had in the streams of the vicinity.

"No," said Roberts, "they are fished too

much to give the fish a chance to grow."

"But the fish that I had the pleasure of eating last night and this morning seemed to have had a chance enough to grow," objected Keene, with a laugh. "They were very large brook trout, and yet they seemed to have the delicate taste which we find usually only in small ones. I would really like to know where those trout were caught."

"I don't care if I tell you," answered the guide. "Those fish came from the stream which runs past the house in the glen. Perhaps you noticed, as we ascended the gorge toward the fall, several quite large, deep black pools or tarns. They are full of trout which weigh all the way from half a pound to two pounds and a half. There are so many of them that, though

the stream is fished probably every day, all the year through, and enough taken out of it to supply the needs of a small family, there is no perceptible decrease in the number of trout. In fact, we have found it advisable, on one or two occasions, to drag the pools with a net in order to prevent them from becoming overcrowded."

"A fisherman's paradise!" exclaimed Keene; but how do you account for the delicate flavor of the large trout? just the taste that one gets

in the little fellows."

"Because they're a different kind from your ordinary trout. They're darker-colored in the first place, perhaps because they swim in the darker water and never get the sunlight. The red spots on them are richer, and they are a finer shape. I never have seen this kind except in our glen. Even in this same stream, above the fall, you will not find one of them."

"That's a very curious fact," said Keene, "and it shows how animals, in time, will change and adapt themselves to their surroundings when transferred to localities different from those where they originated. But it seems to me that we have altered our direction and that now

we are going towards the west."

"You are wrong, sir. One very easily loses his reckoning here in the forest; but to show how clearly you have kept yours, have the goodness to tell me now what direction you would take to come at the glen which we left an hour ago?"

"About there," said Arthur, indicating the point of the compass which he supposed the

right one.

"You are all out, young man, all out. It lies away over there to the right. You are not used to these woods. It's just like sailing the ocean, only harder. Millions and millions of these pine and hemlock trees, and all alike as so many peas. We have come in almost a direct line, and yet, I suppose, it seems to you altogether different."

The young man acknowledged that it did seem different, and at the same time he came to the inward conclusion that it not only seemed different, but that it was different. Though totally unused to traveling the forest, his eye was keen and his perceptions quick and correct, and he knew to a certainty that they had walked almost twice the distance necessary; or, in other words, that Roberts had led him here and there through the woods and had changed the direction of their course as often as possible in order to make him completely lose his reckoning and render it impossible for him to retrace his steps to the mysterious spot where he had lodged the night before.

He, however, kept his own counsel upon the subject. It did not matter after all, as he had promised the strange lady never to return to the spot, and he was so punctilious in such matters that he did not even think of the possibility of

breaking his promise.

After they had proceeded a mile or two farther, his guide paused, and turning to the young man, said, "Here I leave you. You see yonder stream off to the left. Follow that for about a mile, and you will come to an opening in the forest on the farther edge of the highlands upon which we stand now, and from that point you will have a view down over the country for a long way. The cluster of houses which you will see, a mile or two down the mountain, directly ahead of you, is Glendale; and so, goodday, sir!"

"Good-by!" said Keene, extending his hand. "many thanks for the trouble which you have taken. Remember me to your people and tell them that I am sincerely grateful for their kind-

ness."

"I will do so," answered the guide, gravely. "And I will also say," added he, looking Arthur steadily in the eye, "that you will remember your promise."

"Tell them that, too," said the young man,

with fervor.

The two men grasped each other by the hand, and Roberts turned and in a moment was lost to view in the forest.

The young man in due time came to the village of Glendale, and made it his first business to get a lodging in the hotel and to have his baggage, which he found awaiting him at the railway station, removed to his apartments.

The inn or tavern, which was the only one

in the village, was a comfortable and homelike abode. It was kept by an old man named Wilkinson, who had formerly been a guide and trapper of great repute. Many hunters and fishermen stopped there on their way to and from the forest. It was also a resting-place for touring parties of automobilists. The building was a weather-beaten one, but the rooms were large and filled with homelike and old-fashioned furniture and the table was excellent when one considered the locality. Keene installed himself in the two best rooms which the inn afforded and, after spending an unconscionable time in bathing, changing his vestments and arranging his lares and penates, he made a most satisfactory meal and afterward spent an hour with his favorite pipe on the roomy porch which faced the river. For fifteen miles or so from Glendale to the north the river was navigable for small craft, and now and then a row boat or a motor boat passed up and down the stream before him. He gazed at the scene, however, in an absentminded manner, for he was thinking all the time of a certain quaintly clad nymph of the forest and all else seemed trivial and of no account.

From where he sat, he had a good view of the Marwood mansion. The house itself was a great, solid, old-fashioned structure of gray limestone, built squarely, with a large pillared portico in the center of the façade. It was surrounded with gigantic shade-trees of oak and elm, flanked by a number of out-buildings of

every description and size, from the enormous barn or granary to the diminutive smoke-house; and to the right of the house extended a large garden with many graveled walks and rustic seats, parterres of flowers, and a splashing fountain,—the whole surrounded with a high wire trellis, rendered almost impervious to the eye by grape-vines and pear-trees, trained flat-

wise against the wires.

The other houses of the village of Glendale were huddled together at some distance from the mansion, as if they were shy about approaching too nearly their more pretentious neighbor. They were the abodes of the laborers of the vicinity, and resembled the lowly dwellings of vassals clustered about the walls of some castle of feudal times. There were a dozen of these cottages all told, and the village, in addition, was possessed of a saw-mill, the hostelry, and one store, where almost anything might be purchased, from a yard of ribbon to a mowing-machine.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon the young man strolled up the village street and, passing out of the village, came to the homestead of the Marwoods and entered the mansion. He was shown, by a comely, neatly-dressed maidservant, into a large, old-fashioned, quaintly furnished room overlooking the garden and river.

Stephen Marwood was absent, she informed him, and would not return for two weeks. Miss

Marwood was at home, as was also Miss

Cynthia Marwood.

He asked to see Miss Marwood, gave the maid his card and bade her announce him. She left the room, and in a moment or so returned, said that Miss Marwood would be down in an

instant, and retired again.

Arthur glanced around the room. The portraits of several of the ancestors of the Marwoods were hung upon the walls. Some of them were dingy and indistinct with age, and one Puritanic-looking gray-beard, with a ruff, laced band, and skull-cap, seemed as though he might have come over on the Mayflower.

In a few moments there was a light step upon the stair, a rustling in the hallway, and a decidedly handsome girl stood before him.

### CHAPTER V

# BUT HE SAW THE OTHER ONE FIRST

The girl was somewhat above the medium height; she had a singularly graceful figure and her face was quaintly beautiful in feature and expression. Her eyes were of an unfathomable gray and her luxuriant hair was of a light brown, touched here and there, as the light struck it, with a glint of reddish gold. An artist, once having seen her would dream about her. He had seen women of that style of beauty in Paris and in Brussels.

She shook hands with him and greeted him warmly. He addressed her as Miss Marwood, but she at once corrected him:

"I am not Miss Marwood. I am Cynthia Marwood, her cousin. Valeska will be down presently. She sent me ahead that you might

not have so long a wait."

She spoke with a musical voice and with a slowness which, though it had its charm, was somewhat disconcerting. She then motioned him to a chair and, crossing the room, with the ease and manner of a princess, seated herself and lay back against the cushions in a posture of amiable repose and self possession. Her inscrutable gray eyes gazed at him unchangeably, yet in an impersonal way. She had an indolent,

charming air of allowing herself to be admired, as if this was a long established custom which

she gracefully permitted.

She was in no haste to speak and her words were few, yet her remarks were clear and comprehensive and showed intelligence and education.

"You will be agreeably surprised when you see Valeska," said Cynthia presently, "she is a wonderfully handsome girl and of a style which

one very rarely finds."

"This region," said Keene, "seems to abound in pretty girls. Last evening I met one who was ravishingly beautiful, and your cousin will make three."

A faint smile passed over the girl's face.

"One and one do not make three."
"I agree with you," he answered.

Keene could not but be impressed with her beauty, and with the strange mystery of her speech and manner. At the same time he did not waver, for an instant, in his allegiance to the girl whom he had met in the forest. There now sounded other footsteps and swishing of woman's skirts upon the stairs and, looking up, Arthur perceived, standing in the doorway, that being who had filled his waking and sleeping thoughts for the last twenty-four hours. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. No, he could not be mistaken. The lady who stood before him, faultlessly and daintily frocked, a single red rose in the coils of her dark,

glossy hair, was none other than the little huntress.

She stood just outside of the doorway, out of Cynthia's range of vision, and placed her finger upon her lips, as if she might warn Keene to say nothing about their previous meeting; then she came quickly into the room and was introduced by her cousin to the young man, with an expression upon her face and manner which would have done credit to an actress.

So the mysterious and charming being whom he had met under such strange circumstances was Valeska Marwood, the daughter of Stephen Marwood, a man of wealth and importance. He had come to Glendale for the reason that he had some special business with Mr. Marwood, and this business was likely to be of an unpleasant nature. In a moment, he decided that these affairs were of a secondary value and that they might wait indefinitely, in fact, he might conclude to drop the matter altogether. The fact that she was the daughter of Stephen Marwood, an heiress and a young lady of position, made it seem more strange to him that she should be connected with the hidden house in the glen and its singular occupants. The puzzle became more intricate and fascinating. Then he thought of the athletic and well dressed young man whom he had seen fishing as he left the gorge, the owner of the mysterious voice, the man who had written and recited the poem of the Haunted House, and the

artist who had created those gems of landscape. He was a poet and a painter of no inferior order and he was a man who was good to look at. Supposing that he was in love with Valeska, and how could it be otherwise, what chance had

he against such competition?

Valeska was standing back of Cynthia's chair and was leaning over with her round, white arms upon the back of it. There could be no better opportunity for comparing the charms of the two girls, and Arthur made instant and full use of it. There is no pleasanter occupation for the average man than to compare at short range

the attractions of two pretty girls.

Valeska's white, shapely hand stole down upon Cynthia's cheek and neck and Cynthia gazed up for a moment into her cousin's face, with a caressing look. Evidently there was a real and true affection between the two. How rare a thing it is to find two beautiful women who are truly fond of each other. The statement of such a thing is almost a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, there are any number of pairs of handsome and plain girls who love each other devotedly. What is the reason for this?

The young man now turned the conversation to the subject of the Marwood family and, asking the names of the different worthies whose dingy portraits hung upon the walls, was by Valeska put in possession of the history of each

one of them.

The most ancient one of all, the one with the ruff and skull-cap, was Nathaniel Marwood, a man who was born about the year 1630, and who settled at Rowley, a village in the vicinity of Salem, in the State of Massachusetts. He was a lawyer and in maturer years had become a judge, and had presided at some of the trials of the witches who were condemned to death and executed for their deeds.

"Sometimes," said Valeska, "I wish that old William Marwood had been hanged himself, as he certainly deserved it. Only then Cynthia and I would not be here now, and I certainly do not wish that, as I think the world is very beautiful, except for some few things which do not go just right, and I enjoy it all immensely, and then there's Cynthia and some others. No, I am glad, after all, that he was not hanged, though he certainly looks as if he should have been."

"It will surprise you to hear," said Arthur, "that I have a personal quarrel with that same William Marwood."

"How can that be?" asked Cynthia.

"It is the truth. I have had a particular spite against him since I have heard that he tried and condemned the witches. My great-great-great-grandmother on my father's side was a witch."

"How delightful," exclaimed Valeska, "and how interesting it would be, if you had been able to keep some of the tools of her trade in the family, such as her broomstick, or one of her rag dolls in which she used to stick pins when

she wanted to persecute her enemies."

"Unfortunately, Miss Valeska, these things have been lost with the lapse of time. witch, my ancestress, was arrested, when a girl of eighteen years, at Salem, on the charge of witchcraft. She was tried probably by Judge Marwood, but it was toward the last of that singular persecution, when public sentiment began to change; and, finally, together with a hundred or more suspects, she was released. have heard though that the Judge was for hanging them all. Now two hundred years afterwards, things have very materially changed. The Judge's great-great-great-granddaughters are the witches. You, I am sure, have bewitched the total male population within twenty miles of this place, and I am of a mind to constitute myself your judge, and to hale you into court."

It was now arranged, that is to say, it was arranged by Cynthia and Valeska, who did not allow Keene to have a word in the matter, that he was to lunch and dine with them, as long as he remained in the village. He made, however, no very strenuous objections to the arrangement.

The talk drifted very soon after that to the subject of motor cars and motor boats. They even got upon the topic of aeroplanes. Valeska was an authority upon motors of all descriptions and Cynthia, though she said very little about the matter, showed by her occasional remarks,

which were always clear and always made in that slow impersonal way of hers, that she understood the subject quite thoroughly, if she was not such an enthusiast as Valeska. She gave Keene the impression that, being very amiable and willing to please, she would graciously bestow her company upon them, should he and Valeska desire her to go motoring or sailing. Her smile came quickly and sweetly in response to each speaker, and was the more marked as her lips almost at once recovered their serious expression.

Arthur now learned from the girls that they were possessed of a motor boat, named the "Lorelei," thirty-five feet in length and of a speed of fifteen miles, which they kept in a boat house upon the banks of the river; and that they had three cars in their garage, a touring car,

a limousine and a runabout.

"Unfortunately," said Valeska, "our chauffeur is not at present available. In fact, it is
very seldom that he is. He went yesterday to
the city to get some kind of a gear or pinion for
the limousine. That is to say, he gave that as
a reason for going. However, he intended to
go, so I suppose that reason was as good as
another. We do not employ him. He employs
us. Sometimes also, if we are very, very good,
he is kind enough to let us take out a car and
even to drive us. If this autocrat were here and
in a gracious mood, it would be pleasant to take
a run of an hour or two before dinner."

"Let me be your chauffeur," exclaimed Keene. "I will be no haughty minion, but will perform the duties of my office with humble and painstaking alacrity."

"But the touring car is also out of order," answered Valeska, "and we can't go in the

runabout, as it seats only two."

Arthur, as he looked at Valeska, saw no reason why this last should be an objection. He said, however:

"Lead me to the touring car. I am a mechanic myself, in my poor way, and I long to have a tussle with it."

"I will stay here and await the outcome of

it," said Cynthia.

"No, you come with us, that's a dear," said Valeska. "I always do things when you are with me. Your company alone is better than the help of many people. You bring good luck. If you do not come, I know we shall never fix the car."

She put her arm around Cynthia's waist and

laughingly pulled her toward the door.

It seemed to Arthur as if Valeska were fearful lest she should be alone with him, and, with this thought and others equally annoying, he followed the girls out of the house and through the grounds to the garage. They passed through a beautiful and spacious flower garden, in the midst of which was a fountain and a summer house or pavilion. Beyond lay an immense vegetable garden and in front of the

grounds was the road and beyond that the dark winding river, with its background of cultivated fields and forests stretching away to the right and the left, until they seemed blue with the distance.

When they came into the garage, Keene examined the car thoroughly then, while the girls stood near at hand, Valeska giving him a word of advice and Cynthia gazing at him with that absent-minded look in her gray eyes, he divested himself of his coat, rolled up his sleeves and, taking with him a huge wrench and other formidable weapons, crawled under

the chassis and commenced operations.

For a quarter of an hour they saw nothing of him save his feet and heard nothing from him but a series of growls and smothered exclamations, the import of which they knew not, which was fortunate. Presently, however, he emerged and stood upright with a long-drawn sigh of relief. His arms and face were daubed with black smudges. Nevertheless, with his sinewy straightness and the whiteness of his cuticle he was infinitely good to look at. He brandished the wrench over his head, in signal of victory.

"In hoc signo vinces," said Valeska.

"Are you certain that you have fixed it?" asked Cynthia. "William, the despot, our chauffeur, said that it would take a day to put it in order."

"The engine will start at the drop of the

hat," answered Keene, who proceeded to wash himself savagely at the garage sink. Valeska now stepped lightly into the driver's seat and took the steering wheel.

"I am going to drive the car," she announced. Keene helped Cynthia into the tonneau and then, cranking the engine, prepared to get into the front seat with Valeska.

"You are to sit in the tonneau with Cynthia,"

said Valeska imperiously.

Arthur, wondering at the girl's evident determination to avoid his too close proximity, concealed his injured feelings and took the place designated. Foolish young man. How many countless thousands of male beings would have envied him the privilege of sitting beside that

paragon of loveliness.

Valeska could certainly drive. The car rolled smoothly down the cinder path of the grounds into the road. She made the turns with perfect skill. In a moment, they were passing through the single street of the village on second speed. By a slight swerve to one side she saved a dog's life, by another she avoided a tipsy woodsman who was crossing the street in front of the Inn, and at the same time, a damage suit. When they were well out of the village and upon the state road, which was in smooth and elegant condition, she slipped in the third-speed gear. The car which was of forty-horse power, gave a great bound forward and then settled to its work with a smooth and rhythmical purr of

the engines which had a most delightful sound. Keene leaned forward and looked at the speedometer. It registered a little short of thirty miles an hour.

"What is the speed limit in these parts?"

he asked of Cynthia.

"I am not sure, but I think it is ten miles."

"Ten miles and a twenty-dollar bill," cried Valeska, turning toward them and showing for an instant that row of small, white, even teeth and the distracting dimple in her cheek.

"Her driving is like the driving of Jehu the

son of Nimshi," said Arthur to Cynthia.

"Yes, but you forget that if Jehu had had a forty-horse power motor, he would have made a much better record."

"Yes, and those were the good old days when they had no speed limit laws. Jehu was never

fined for over-speeding."

It was one of those rare days in June which the poet speaks of. The air blowing in their faces, was crisp, cool and delicious, the scenery through which they passed was of swiftly changing and wild beauty. They were traveling along a broad valley and, on either hand, far away, arose the mountainous hills clothed in the dark, mysterious green of the everlasting forest. Now and then the winding river came into view or the blue expanse of a lake glimmered for a moment through the trees. Added to this all was the thrill, the exhilaration which comes

from the unutterably swift and delightful flight of the car.

"I always enjoy it so much; the pleasure of it is so far beyond words, that I forget to talk. I can do nothing but sit still and drink it in,"

said Cynthia.

"It is certainly very beautiful," said Arthur inanely. It must be remembered, however, that he was looking at Valeska's shapely back and at her round ivory neck and the wind-blown wisps and tendrils of brown hair which caressed

it. Perhaps that is what he meant.

Presently another car, containing a single occupant, came swiftly toward and passed them. Keene caught but a momentary glimpse of the driver of the car, but, in that moment, he thought he recognized in him the man of the mysterious cottage in the glen. The passing was so swift that he could not see if there was a greeting between this personage and the girls. Cynthia still preserved her air of amiable indifference, but Valeska's cheek, what he could see of it, seemed to have taken on a rosy color which had all the appearance of a blush.

"Damn," said Keene to himself, "the man

has a car, too."

When they had been running for perhaps an hour, Keene perceived a quarter mile ahead a man standing in the middle of the road and waving a red flag. He looked like a farmer and wore a straw hat and a tuft of reddish beard

which sprouted up out of his collar like a fountain.

"That man," said Valeska, half turning, "is the Justice of the Peace of the town of Wilmount. We are now upon the borders of his town and he thinks that he is going to hold us up and fine us. He maintains a regular trap for autoists and is making a comfortable competence from it. However, he only thinks he is going to stop us."

The error in the Justice's thoughts was quickly shown, as the car darted past him without slowing up, and he only escaped the wheels by making a leap to one side which was astonish-

ing in one of his years.

"What will he do now?" asked Arthur de-

lightedly.

"He will run to his house which stands near by and telephone to his constable who stands on the road two miles away at the other end of the town. The constable will then stretch a rope across the road, from fence to fence, so as to effectually bar the way. Meanwhile, the Justice will hitch up a horse and drive down to collect the fine."

"But is there no other road intersecting this,

by which we can escape the constable?"

"None whatever. This road is a veritable cul de sac. However, I think we can manage it. In fact, I have done so once already."

When they had gone about a mile further, they came to a patch of woods alongside of the

road and, there being no fence, Valeska turned the car and drove it in among the trees, using for this purpose an old, disused wagon track. When the engines were stopped and the car came to a stand, it was completely hidden from the road, but at the same time, from their hidingplace behind the leaves they could easily watch any vehicle, should one pass by.

In ten minutes, surely enough, they heard the clatter of hoofs, and quickly thereafter they saw the Justice driving furiously by in an

ancient buggy.

After waiting five minutes more, Valeska asked Keene to crank the engine. She then wheeled the car back upon the road and drove it swiftly away in the direction whence they had come.

"But," said Arthur, "he has undoubtedly taken your number, and will hale you to court

upon the morrow's day."

"Not so," answered the girl. "You see this wire which comes up through the bottom of the car and this ring at the end of the wire just under the steering wheel. Well, that wire runs back under the body and is fastened to the number sign through a small hole at the bottom of it. When I pull on the ring it brings the sign up to a horizontal position, so that he couldn't see the number of the car unless he were lying on his back and the car ran over him. You saw that this did not happen. Consequently, he doesn't know our number,"

Keene laughed heartily.

"I saw that wire when I was fixing the car and wondered what new contraption it was. And have they never succeeded in collecting a fine from you for speeding?"

"Sometimes," answered she.

"Many times," said Cynthia to Keene in a

low voice.

#### CHAPTER VI

# THE GHOST AGAIN

When they had arrived at the Marwood Mansion, the fair driver of the car suggested that they should continue their run to the north.

"It is still early," said she, "the roads in this direction are good for eight or ten miles further on, and there are several choice bits of land-scape which I would like to have you see."

As Arthur managed to include the profile of the girl in each glimpse which he took of the passing scenery, he felt well content to let the matter go on indefinitely and so expressed himself.

When they had got six or seven miles to the north of Glendale, where the road wound through the edge of the forest, they came to a house which stood by the wayside, and which nestled beneath a fir-clad hill, arising abruptly back of it. It was a bungalow of two stories, built of pine logs, with the bark on, and the lower story was completely circled with a rustic veranda. It was a large house and, though of rough materials, was built with great care and disregard of expense; in addition to this, it was surrounded by a well kept lawn, in which, here and there were flower beds and arbors. Here were evidences of recent care, but

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the bungalow itself, strangely enough, seemed unoccupied; for every window, without exception, was tightly closed with a pair of solid, panelled, green shutters.

The girl at the wheel stopped the car in

front of the gate of the house.

"I want some tea," said she in a plaintive voice.

"But Mr. Hare is away from home," ob-

jected the other girl.

"So much the better. I will have Nancy make it for us and serve it in the arbor back of the house. Nancy is the housekeeper and maid of all work," added she, to Keene.
"It doesn't look to me," said Cynthia slowly,

"as if anybody were at home."

"I don't care. We want some tea, and tea we will have, if I have to burglarize the kitchen door."

Saying this, the girl sprang lightly from the car and walked toward the rear of the house,

followed by the others.

Arthur wondered who this Mr. Keene was. He was certainly a most fortunate person, since these two young ladies were upon such friendly terms with him that they proposed to break into his house during his absence. He wished that he himself had a house and that they would burglarize it, only he would wish to be there at the time.

After Valeska had rapped upon the kitchen door repeatedly with her small, firm little fist and Keene himself had pounded upon it, until he was afraid that he would break the panel, and all to no effect, the three of them sat down upon a rustic bench and drank some ice cold water from a tiny spring which trickled from the hillside; using for the purpose, a tin dipper which was fastened to the rock with a chain.

"If I were a man," said Valeska, reflectively,

"I could get into the house."

"If you were a man," answered Arthur, "with a man's sense of righteousness, you wouldn't think of breaking into another man's house."

"If I were a man," continued she, unheeding, "I would climb that post to the roof of the porch; then I would take a stick and poke it through that hole, where the shutter is broken at the lower corner, and work the catch so that I could open the shutter; then I would raise the sash, get into the room and come down the stair and unbolt the kitchen door. There is a spirit lamp in the cupboard and I could have our tea ready in no time at all. If I were a man, and two unfortunate damsels were perishing for the want of the cup which cheers but does not intoxicate, I would enter that house, bolts and bars to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Love laughs at locksmiths," said Keene, giving her a significant glance, "and with that principle in view, I am resolved to make the

attempt."

He arose, and providing himself with a stout twig of convenient length, prepared to

climb to the roof of the veranda, but was

stopped by Valeska.

"Wait a moment," said she. "It is only fair to tell you, before you enter the dark and unknown passages of that gloomy mansion, that you run a very fair risk of meeting up with a ghost. According to common report and the unchallenged testimony of a cloud of witnesses, the place has been haunted for the last dozen years."

"That settles it," said Arthur. "That is the one incentive needful. Nothing now could keep me from entering. But what is the ghost like? I should have a description of the spook, so that I will be able to identify him, should we meet."

I will be able to identify him, should we meet." "The story is like this," she answered. "Twelve or thirteen years ago, a gentleman of wealth, whose name was Radcliff, built the house and brought his young wife there to live. When they had been in the house but a week, she fell down the stairs and was killed. Mr. Radcliff became insane and was taken to an asylum where, shortly afterward, he also died.

"How did they know that he was insane?"

asked Keene, irrelevantly.

"How do they know that anyone is insane?

For one thing, he tried to kill his cook."

"That doesn't prove that he was insane. Without doubt the cook deserved killing. Most cooks do. I have wanted to kill the cook often. If all the cooks were killed who deserved it, there would be a frightful mortality in the pro-

fession. I have peculiar views about insanity and sanity. That is the reason why I asked how they knew that he was insane. The whole thing is a matter of opinion. For instance, I regard people as lunatics who go to vaudeville shows, to the so called musical comedies and to prize fights; who eat patent breakfast foods, wear tight shoes and read the best sellers. The people who dote upon these things naturally regard me as a raving maniac because I loathe them. Radcliff's cook, undoubtedly persisted in serving him with patent breakfast foods."

"Mr. Radcliff's cook," answered the girl, disdainfully, "undoubtedly persisted in interrupting him when he was trying to say something; as you have interrupted me in the telling of my

story."

"I beg your pardon humbly, but I thought

you had finished."

"After the death of Mr. Radcliffe, the mansion remained untenanted for ten years. Strange sounds were heard coming from the house and lights were seen in the windows at night by chance wayfarers; so that it became common talk that it was haunted. Some people even claim to have seen a ghost."

"And what do they say the gentleman looks

like?"

"It isn't a gentleman. It is a lady, and is supposed to be the ghost of Mrs. Radcliff. Some two years ago, Mr. Hare, a friend of ours, bought the house and, braving tradition, took

up his abode there. Whether he himself has

seen the apparition, I know not."

"If this lady ghost is of a fair and attractive appearance, let us hope that he has. Your friend, Mr. Hare will undoubtedly be in the condition of his March namesake when he finds out that I have broken into his house; however, here goes for the ghost, or I would say for the tea."

"You speak in a light and disrespectful manner, and I do not think that you believe in ghosts

at all."

"There you wrong me. My faith in all kinds of apparitions is deeply seated and generous. I have always longed to meet a ghost face to face, and I live in hopes. People who wish to see ghosts usually see them. Though this does not always hold good. For instance, members of the theatrical profession often wish to see the ghost walk, but are disappointed. One must be in a receptive mood and have faith. The ghost always refuses to appear to the skeptic and the scoffer. The true ghost hates a skeptic as the Devil hates holy water. Well, I must be off. I must not keep the ghost waiting; especially the ghost of a lady."

"Keene had little trouble in climbing to the roof of the porch, and the unfastening of the catch of the shutter proved an easy matter. Fortunately, he found the lock of the sash broken and, raising the latter, he stepped across the sill into the room. The chamber in which

he found himself seemed to be used as a store room. At the further end was a door which was fastened with a spring lock. Turning the knob or button of this lock, he opened the door and stepped into a corridor. Just then, however, a puff of wind came from the open window and the door slammed to behind him, and he found himself in the blackest kind of utter darkness. He then tried to open the door through which he had come, but there was no knob on that side of the door; nothing but a key hole.

He now felt his way along the walls of the corridor, meaning to find the stairway of which the girls had spoken and so to descend to the lower floor. The hallway now seemed to turn to the right and, following it, he presently stumbled over two or three articles of furniture, and concluded that he had left the corridor and entered a bed chamber. After a while he came to a window and tried to open it, but neither sash would stir. They had either become warped, or had been firmly screwed or nailed in their places.

What struck him forcibly was the absolute and utter silence of the house. Had a pin dropped in the lower story, he could have heard it. There was something eerie and uncanny

about it and it got upon his nerves.

After a while he succeeded in groping his way out of the chamber and into the hallway and, following this up to the end, he found himself, to his annoyance, in another bed room. He

now realized to the full the complete helplessness of a man in the dark. If he were only a cat he would have no trouble at all. When that door with the spring lock had first closed behind him he had looked for a match in his match box and had found none. He now sought more carefully and found a single match. Very wisely, however, he concluded to save it until the last moment.

Presently he heard a noise in the lower regions of the house. It was faint and far off and might have been made by a closing door or a chair falling upon the carpet. He listened for a while intently, but nothing further happened. He was a hardened materialist and, had any one suggested that there was something supernatural in it, he would have laughed away the idea in scorn. Nevertheless, he was conscious of a tingling of the nerves, as he listened for further sounds.

He felt his way about the chamber until he again found himself in the corridor and here, after wandering aimlessly for some moments he came to the railing of a stairway. Thinking naturally that his troubles were now past and gone, he descended to the lower floor. It occurred to him, however, that this was not the kitchen or back stairway, since the steps were covered with a thick soft carpet. He was evidently in the front hallway of the mansion. A few feet from the bottom of the stairs he came to a pair of large doors which seemed to him

to be the front doors of the house. They were, however, locked and the key was not in the lock.

In the wall to the left of the doors there was a wide doorway or arch which plainly led into the drawing or reception room. Into this he groped his way, with the result that he stumbled over several pieces of furniture, easy chairs, tables and the like. It now struck him that he heard other sounds; the sounds of footsteps and of the rustling of women's skirts. They were faint and lasted but for a moment and he owned to himself that he might be mistaken in thinking that he heard them.

"Surely," thought he, "those two witches

have not climbed to the veranda roof."

He had found a door at the further end of the apartment and had passed through it into another room where there were books upon shelves against the wall. He was standing in the middle of the chamber when he was conscious that there was another person present. A sort of sixth sense told him of it. He even fancied that he could hear this person breathing. He followed up the sound until his left hand touched the books. Then he reached out his right hand and passed it over the soft roundness of a woman's form. As he stepped back, snatching away his hand, his fingers came into contact with smooth, silken tresses of hair, and he heard some small object drop upon the carpet.
"I beg your pardon," he exclaimed. "Is that

you, Miss Valeska?"

There was no answer.

He now bethought himself of the match and taking out his match box tried to extract it, but found that it was caught in the spring of the lid, so that it was some few seconds before he got it out. When he succeeded in lighting it, he was astonished, for there was no one in the room save himself. He picked up the small object which he had heard fall to the floor and, as the light flickered out, he caught a glimpse of an enlarged photograph on an easel upon the center table. It was the picture of Cynthia.

He found a large leather-covered chair and sat down to await further developments, but there were none. He listened intently for further sounds, but all was as silent as the grave, excepting for the faint but distinct gnawing of a mouse in the wainscoting in some distant part of the building. Whoever it was who was in the house could not get out without his hearing them. Of that he felt assured. When, however, he had waited and listened for five minutes and had heard nothing, he decided to find his way out of doors where, he was certain, the enigma would be solved. He felt his way finally to a door opposite the one by which he had entered and, passing through, stumbled against a large round table, which seemed as if it might be a dining-table. He continued on through another door into a room with a bare wooden floor, and ran up against something hard which hurt his knee outrageously. This hard object proved to be a stove and he was rejoiced by the knowledge that, at last, he was in the much sought for kitchen. Without much trouble he found the outer door. He unbolted it, and flung it open, and, at once a great flood of light streamed in and almost blinded him. What was his astonishment now to see the two girls sitting exactly as he had left them upon the rustic bench by the spring. Their manner and attitude were indolent and unconcerned, and they were talking calmly and serenely.

As he came toward them they looked up and he noticed a somewhat strange and startled ex-

pression in their faces.

"Wherever have you been for this quarter hour?" asked Valeska. "We certainly thought that you were taking a nap. You evidently forgot about the tea. It is too late for it now, as

it would spoil our appetite for dinner."

"It is all on account of a door with a spring lock. After I had gone out of that room into which I climbed from the porch, the wind blew the door shut and left me in the most absolute and impenetrable darkness. Ever since then I have been wandering and blundering around trying to find the way to the kitchen. It was like trying to find a black cat in a dark cellar."

"But what were all those strange noises

which we heard?"

"I made those noises falling over the furniture."

"That is too bad. I am awfully sorry that I insisted on the tea."

"I have a feeling that the suggestion of tea

was part of a conspiracy."

"What kind of a conspiracy? You surely do not think that I could foresee that you would be left in the dark in that way? But what a strange appearance you have. There is dust on your clothing and a black smudge on your cheek. Your eyes also have a queer, blinking expression. I have it. You have seen the ghost."

"I have seen nothing. Remember how dark it was. I really thought, however, that I

touched a ghost."

A faint smile stole over Cynthia's face and she looked away across the valley toward the blue mountain tops.

"How silly!" exclaimed Valeska. "One does not touch a ghost. If you tried to touch one,

you could feel nothing."

"There are ghosts and ghosts," answered Keene. "And I certainly did touch one. This ghost was probably one of the palpable kind."

"How exciting it must have been! And was

it Mrs. Radcliff's ghost?"

"Not having known Mrs. Radcliff in the flesh, I cannot tell. If it was Mrs. Radcliff's ghost, however, I will say that Mrs. Radcliff must have been a most charming and statuesque person. By the by, do ghosts, that is to say, lady ghosts, wear hair pins?"

"What a nonsensical question! Of course

they do not."

"But in some of the pictures of ghosts which I have seen, the hair was put up in the conventional manner. This, of course, argues the

use of hair pins."

"Oh, well, let us suppose that they do wear hair pins, only, of course, they must be of the same unsubstantial stuff as the ghost. I cannot understand though, why you should worry about the matter."

Arthur took a large tortoise-shell hair pin half way from his pocket and showed it surreptitiously to Valeska. The girl made a movement with her hand toward her hair, but swifly desisted from it. Then she gazed away from him down the road at something which seemed to excite a more than passing interest. It seemed to Keene that she was laughing, but he could not be sure.

When they were again in the car and had started toward home, the incident of the ghost was continually in his mind. He was morally certain that the girl sitting in front of him was with him in the house, and that it was her person that he had touched, but how had she entered the house, and how had she got out of it without his hearing her. The exhaust of the engines, the very clicking of the engines themselves seemed to take up the refrain and to repeat it over and over: "How did she get in? How did she get in? How did she get out?"

#### CHAPTER VII

## THE SHADOW ON THE CURTAIN

It will be easily concluded, from what we have seen of Valeska, that she was of a gay and mischievous nature and addicted to all manner of playful jest and nonsense; that she was, for the most part, of a merry disposition and prepared to trip through life with a laugh upon her lips and a roguish sparkle in her dark eyes.

Cynthia, upon the other hand, was grave and demure and sweet. She was pensive without being sad and silent without being cold. Though she spoke very little, yet her gray eyes expressed volumes, and though her smile was shadowy and evanescent, yet was it replete with sympathy

and understanding.

It would be hard to say which of these two girls would make a man's best life companion. In her own way each one of them was perfection. The average man, seeing both of them together for the first time, would not know how to choose between them and would most certainly wish to marry both. If a man should marry both of them and were tried for bigamy, and the girls were exhibited to the jury, the jury would surely acquit him on account of there having been such extenuating circumstances.

We must give Keene credit, however, for

a more fixed and orthodox purpose. He had seen Valeska first and had fallen in love with her; not that he would not have fallen in love with her had he seen both girls at once and at the same time. Moreover, though it was but twenty-four hours since he had beheld her, he was in love with her a hundred fathoms deep. He wanted her, wanted her very badly and have her he must and would.

At dinner that first night they were all three in the conventional evening dress. Valeska presided over the tea and coffee Keene sat opposite her and carved while Cynthia sat at his left hand, between him and Valeska, the table being reduced to a convenient and cozy size. The candles, shaded with colored mantles, threw a soft and mystic hue upon fair cheeks and softly outlined arms and shoulders. The young man gazed at the face of the girl opposite him with all his heart in his eyes. He conducted himself with propriety, his remarks and actions were sane and decorous, and no one observing him would have supposed that he was crazy. Yet crazy he was, and growing crazier every moment. Arthur noticed that the ladies were continually calling each other by name, usually adding some term of endearment. was something like this:

"One lump or two, to-night, Cynthia dear?"

"Two, Valeska darling."

"Cynthia mine, how do you like this recipe for French dressing?"

"Of the two Valeska dearest, I think I prefer the old one."

And so it went. It was Cynthia this and Valeska that and Cynthia here and Valeska there, until the young man could but give the matter some notice.

The waitress, a comely country girl, was holding a dish of salad, which she was about to place upon the table. Suddenly, without warning and without any apparent reason, she gave utterance to a loud, foolish giggle, then she giggled again and now, as if the giggling were but the prelude, she began to laugh chokingly and seemed as though she were becoming hysterical.

"Martha," commanded Valeska sternly, "put that dish down on the table and go into the

kitchen. When I want you, I will ring."

"What is the matter with the girl?" asked

the young man.

"How should I know," answered Valeska. "It is impossible to explain the vagaries of an idiot."

Keene thought the occurrence a very strange one. Why did the girl giggle at that particular moment? Nothing had happened to provoke her mirth. Several times, during the meal and the evening afterward, the thing came into his mind. It was, to be sure, a trifling matter, but why did she do it?

The dessert was upon the table when, suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, Arthur caught sight of some white object, standing upright upon the floor beside him. He turned and saw a large, sleek, well fed, black and white cat, who was sitting up on his haunches and begging like a dog. His big, bright green eyes were fixed upon Keene's face. His head was tilted aside and upward and his countenance was alight with intelligence and appeal.

Keene gave an exclamation of surprise. He had never seen a cat begging. He did not know that this is one of the accomplishments of learned

felines.

"He sees a stranger present, who does not know that he is an arrant humbug and at once tries to impose upon him. He has had his dinner already, so you must not give him anything."

"But how, in the name of Heaven, can I resist giving him something? Look at that face and those saucer eyes, and those dependent and suppliant paws. I never saw anything like that before in my life. I must give him something."

Arthur put some charlotte russe in a saucer and placed it before Mr. Grimalkin, who at once fell upon all fours and proceeded to lap

it up.

"How did you ever teach him?" he asked.

"We did not each him," said Valeska. "He taught himself. Our fox terrier always sits up and begs for his dinner. Tommy was generally at hand on these occasions, and noticing that the terrier, by reason of his accomplishments, ob-

tained more than his fair share of largesse, conceived the idea of sitting up and begging like the terrier."

As they arose from the table, Tommy finished his repast and, running to the door which led into the library, turned and looked at

them and began to miaow.

"He wants to play ball," said Cynthia. When they were all come into the drawing room, Valeska took a sheet of letter paper and crumpled it into a small ball about an inch and a quarter in diameter; Tommy meanwhile walking around her and regarding the operations with all the marks of a lively interest. Valeska, having seated herself in a chair by the window, threw the ball through the archway into the library, so that it went to the farthest corner of the room and lodged under a sofa. Tommy went after it, a streak of black and white lightning and, disappearing under the sofa, emerged a moment later with the ball in his teeth. He then trotted slowly back to his mistress and laid it at her feet. This was repeated a dozen times and then Tommy, after bringing back the ball, stretched himself upon his side upon the rug, as if he said: "I'm tired. That's enough for the present."

"I never saw a cat fetch and carry like a dog, either," said Keene. "Tommy certainly possesses the wisdom of the ages and he should have a more distinguished name. This is a trick which of course you taught him, though I do

not see how you went to work to do it." "No," answered Valeska, "he was also selfinstructed in this. It commenced by our throwing the ball for him, then, one day, he brought the ball back to us, and finding that it was such capital sport, he has kept it up ever since. The funniest part of the whole thing is that he always wishes us to play ball after dinner, as you saw just now. You say that he should have a more distinguished name. What do you say to Thomas à Becket? That is really and truly his full name and it seems too that it leaves nothing to be desired in the way you mention.

"I can understand the Thomas," said Keene,

"but why à Becket?"

"Why, it occurred to us that Thomas à Becket was the most celebrated of all the Thomases in history. That was, I think, the reason of it."

"Since you have named the cat, 'Thomas à Becket,' you should naturally call the terrier, 'Henry the Second,' suggested Arthur.

"Tommy has none of his namesake's cantankerous qualities," answered Valeska. "He is of a most lovable and affectionate nature, and of an equable and benign disposition. He never spits or growls and he treats the terrier, or, as you would have him named, 'Henry the Second,' with friendly and tolerant familiarity; provided always that Henry the Second does not poach upon his own particular bone or saucer of milk."

Arthur was much amused by the performance

of this paragon of animals, and he laughed to himself at the serious way in which his mistress recounted his virtues. He did not know that Thomas à Becket was soon to play an important part in the unfolding of the drama in which he himself was an actor.

Presently, at Cynthia's suggestion, they went out into the garden and sat in the pavilion. It was a warm, delightful night, the air was heavy with the scent of the flowers, the sky of a blue blackness and a thousand myriads of stars shone out with a white and brilliant luster.

They listened to the tinkle of the fountain and the soft chirp of birds settling themselves for the night, and they watched the pale green Luna moth and the humming bird moth hovering over the roses and syringas. They looked at the stars, and Cynthia, who was learned in astronomy, pointed out all the different planets and constellations.

Valeska wondered what had become of the seventh Pleiad and recited a poem upon the subject, and Keene, who, besides having made several other voyages, had navigated a yacht from Boston to Bermuda, thence to Porto Rico and St. Thomas and from there to the Azores and Gibraltar and back again to Boston, explained the manner of taking an observation from the sun and moon and from the polar star and Aldebaran and how the result was figured out to get the latitude.

They discussed the nebular hypothesis, the

rings of Saturn and the four moons of Jupiter; they talked of the Planet Mars with its snow-capped polar regions, its irrigating canals and its seas and oceans. Then they argued as to whether there were inhabitants upon Mars and Venus and how far they might differ in appearance from the human beings of earth by reason of the difference in temperature, atmosphere and gravity.

A maid now came from the house and handed a note to Cynthia and that young lady, excusing herself for a few minutes, followed the maid in doors and left Keene and Valeska alone for the first time. Keene at once sought to avail himself

of the opportunity.

"I little thought, Miss Valeska," said he, "when I left you yesterday, or rather, when you left me, that I should have the pleasure of seeing you again so soon, and that I should find you the daughter of Stephen Marwood."

"When I left you yesterday?" asked the girl, with an inflection as if she did not understand

him.

"Yes, in the glen, by the bungalow."

"What glen and what bungalow?" she asked

guilelessly.

"I see," said the young man, smiling, "that you intend to mystify and have some fun with me, but it will not do. I mean the cottage hidden in the old stone-quarry in the glen, the place where I was marooned upon a rock, from which you rescued me by pushing a tree trunk across

the chasm. That is categorical enough, isn't it?"

"I do not know what you are talking about,"

said Valeska.

"Ha, ha," laughed Arthur, "I suppose you will say next that we have never met until to-day."

"But we haven't," answered the girl, looking

at him calmly and collectedly.

It began now to dawn upon Keene that the young lady was serious in the matter, that she was, with malice prepense, taking the position that they had never met before that morning, and that she meant really to ignore everything which happened upon the day before. She was truly a most exasperating and tantalizing specimen of womankind.

"Do you really and definitely mean to say that we did not meet in the forest yesterday, under the circumstances which I have just mentioned; that you did not take me to the cottage or bungalow and procure for me supper and lodging, and that you did not exact from me a promise to the effect that I would never mention our meeting, or reveal the existence of the house in the glen?"

"That is what I mean exactly," answered Valeska, with a teasing slowness, "and besides, if you really did make such a promise to some lady whom you met, it seems to me that it was not worth much, for you have substantially told

me all about the matter."

It was some time before Keene could fully

realize the state of affairs and the whole thing caused him much wonder and astonishment. He

looked at Valeska in admiration.

"You are certainly the smartest girl whom I have met in many a year, and I see that you must have your way like the generality of Eve's daughters. As to the promise though, I have told the secret to none but you, nor shall it go further. Thus I still maintain that the promise is intact."

Cynthia now returned from the house, and the subject was dropped for the time at least.

At half past ten Keene bade the young ladies good night and sought his quarters at the Inn. When he had gone up to his chamber he stood irresolute and debated the question as to whether he should go to bed. He had a lot to think about and sleep was out of the question. He would take tobacco and pipes and go down and sit upon the porch, facing the river, and think about

the girl.

He found the porch deserted and, as he sat there in the cool of the silent night, every incident of the last forty-eight hours passed clearly in review before him. He certainly loved the girl. He had to acknowledge it to himself. It was surprising how much a man could fall in love in that short time. He had always ridiculed the idea of such a thing being possible. There were a number of incidents in his acquaintance with her which annoyed him. Why should they annoy him if he was not deeply interested in her?

He checked these disagreeable things off upon his fingers. Item one: She was intimately connected with some person or persons who were hiding, yes, hiding was the only name for it, in the house of the abandoned stone-quarry. Item two: She was fearful that these people would be found out. Item three: One of these people, the fisherman whom he had seen in the glen, was a well-favored youth and a poet and painter to boot. Item four: They had met this young man while they were motoring, and he could have sworn that Valeska blushed. Item five: Valeska had most astonishingly repudiated Keene's former meeting with her and every-thing connected with it. Little things came up too in his memory and added their quota to the whole confounded mystery. Why was it that the girl who waited upon them at dinner should have a fit of giggling when there was no apparent reason for it? What was that vague something in Cynthia's speech and manner which clothed her with an undefinable strangeness? He concluded that the queerest thing about the whole affair was that, notwithstanding the presence of so many adverse factors in the case, he was surely growing fonder of the girl with every moment. Therein he reasoned falsely. These factors which he called adverse were of the very opposite quality. They were the barriers which excited his wish for possession; they were the sauce, the relish which increased his appetite and

the beloved object seem still more desirable.

Urged by an irresistible longing to be near the girl and to visit once more the scenes made dear by her daily presence, where he could think of her to his heart's content, he decided to go up once more to the Marwood house. It was nearly midnight, and they would all surely have retired. He would seek the pavilion in the garden and from that spot, made sweet by her recent presence, with his eyes fixed upon the walls which contained her, he would give himself up to the contemplation of her sprightliness, her beauty and all the dear, complex mystery of her nature. He was in the garden, on his way to the pavilion and, all at once, he noticed that the library was lighted up, the shades being already drawn. As he stopped and gazed, surprised that anyone should be up at that late hour, a man's figure was silhouetted upon the curtain. He was young and of a good figure, and wore a pointed beard. There was no mistaking him; he was the fisherman of the glen, the man who had passed them in the car. As Keene looked, his soul filled with bitterness, the form of the cat, Thomas à Becket suddenly appeared upon a table by the man's side. The cat rubbed his head against the man's sleeve. This showed that the man was a familiar figure in the house, for Thomas à Becket had not rubbed his head against Keene when they had met that evening.

Presently the figure of a girl was pictured

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upon the shade at the man's side. Then the man placed his arm upon the girl's shoulder and, together the man and the girl stroked the back of Thomas à Becket. Then the man turned and took the girl's two hands in his and seemed to be talking earnestly with her, and then he put his arm around her waist and they walked away and their shadows disappeared. Keene could not see whether the girl was Valeska or Cynthia, since they were both of the same height and general contour. His reason told him that it was Valeska, but his heart kept saying all the time: It is not Valeska, it cannot be she, it must not be she. It is Cynthia."

He stole noiselessly from the garden and tramped the road for an hour before he went back to his bed at the Inn. For a long time he lay awake, arguing the pros and cons of the

matter.

"He did not kiss her anyway," was his reflection.

# CHAPTER VIII

# THE TELLTALE PHOTOGRAPHS

When he awoke in the morning, the bright sunlight was shining into his chamber and, as he again thought of the occurrences of the preceding night, his reason seemed to reassert itself; his brain seemed to clear, and he felt that he could take a more common-sense view of the matter.

"I am making a confounded fool of myself," thought he. "I am getting into no end of a mess with this girl and the longer I stay here the worse it will be for me in the end." I will arise and go to my father; that is to say, I would go to my father, were he alive, which he isn't, but I will do the next best thing, which is to take the first train for New York. I have been away from the city too long, as it is. I am getting rusty, I am seeing things. These woods and mountains make me sentimental. I am getting to look at matters from a wrong viewpoint. Things haven't got their proper proportion. am absolutely going insane about a girl, who is already spoken for and who is besides tangled up in some mysterious way with some altogether likely nefarious persons. Of course, she isn't to blame. She's too handsome and sweet and refined. Oh, the devil! what's the use?"

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So he got out of bed and dressed and ate a hurried breakfast. Then he packed in desperate haste, throwing his vestments into suit case and bag, as if he were casting refuse into an ash can. Next he wrote a note to the Marwoods telling them that he had been called suddenly to the city, and making his excuses in proper and decent fashion. This note he took with him to the railway station and sent a boy with it to their house, just as the train came in. He did not send it earlier as he was afraid that one or both of the girls might come to the station or meet him on the village street, and he felt that it would be better not to put his resolution to such a test.

After the train started and he had settled himself in the buffet car with a cigar, he felt that he had done a very creditable thing. He prided himself upon the resolution which he had shown. "It was best, after all," thought he, "to cut the Gordian knot. To get out of it, while I could do so, without a heart ache." He was certainly following the path of wisdom, and he was glad of it. As for the girl herself, she was certainly the best in the world, but what was the use of that, as long as the thing was impossible. He would think no more of her, and that settled it.

And he kept to his word and thought no more of her; he thought no more of her for at least five minutes. A hundred times he forced his mind to dwell upon other things and a hun-

dred times he found himself thinking of the girl again. When they came to the city where the Adirondack road made a junction with the main line, several people got into his Pullman car; among them being two fairly pretty girls. He could not look at these two girls without comparing them with Valeska and noting how much the latter surpassed them in the dark silkiness of her hair, the oval of her face, the soft tint of her skin and the slender grace of her figure. When half of the eight hours of the journey had passed, he felt his resolution oozing away. He wondered whether he had been hasty in taking his departure from Glendale, whether he had ascribed too great importance to the mysterious and annoying incidents of the preceding two days, and whether it would all have come out right and satisfactory and his faith in the girl have been justified, had he only remained a little longer. However, the die was cast, he had crossed the Rubicon and he must now keep on to the bitter end.

When he arrived at the Grand Central Station, he got his things into a taxicab and was quickly transferred to a bachelor's apartment house on upper Madison Avenue, where he maintained a suite of rooms for his use when in the city. He got hold of a man who acted as a supernumerary valet in the house and, after unpacking, taking a shower bath and dressing, he went to his favorite restaurant for dinner; an exclusive little jewel of a place where the

dignified waiters spoke in whispers, where the cooking was a miracle, the lights subdued and rose-colored, the silver solid and the napery like driven snow. Here were a number of ladies, dressed in quiet and exquisite taste, many of them delicately beautiful in face and form. He was sorry that he had come there, for this one had a mouth and teeth something like the girl's, another one actually had a dimple, and the back of the neck of still another, with the fluffy tendrils of hair caressing it, was also like the girl's. Could he go nowhere without being forever reminded of her? To cap the climax, he had no appetite. The cooking was not what it was formerly. His filet a la Creole was rank with garlic. His Chateau La Fitte of 1880 was like vinegar.

Leaving his dinner, for the most part, uneaten, he went to see a play which had been warmly praised by the dramatic critics and which was drawing large houses. The so called pathetic parts of the drama made him laugh and the funny parts were pitiable. He was enraged that the audience should laugh at such drivel and he glowered at the applauding spectators

in his vicinity. It was rotten.

Then he went to a club to which he belonged. There were a number of men sitting around in the smoking room. They were drinking Scotch whiskey, talking scandal and telling stories which were scarcely decent. Two or three of them spoke to him. He answered them rudely

and went out, cursing under his breath at the sordid coarseness and worthlessness and foulness of the whole outfit.

Next he went to one of those all night, lobster and champagne palaces, for kill time he must. Here were ladies of a lighter sort, many of them undeniably beautiful, all of them superbly robed and sparkling with jewels. He noted the rouge and the powder on their handsome faces, and as he watched their cheeks grow flushed and their eyes sparkling and moist, and heard their voices growing louder and their laughter sillier, he was filled with disgust and

loathing. Oh, wasn't it rotten?

Then a vision of the wilderness arose before him, with its craggy mountains, millions of years old, covered with their garments of pine trees, sparkling in the sun and darkly green and mysterious in the sunset; its thousands of placid lakes set like sapphires in the woodland, the myriads of streams and rivers, now winding darkly beneath the tamaracks, now brawling among the boulders, or leaping like specks of diamond dust from the cliffs and making miniature rainbows out of the sunlight. And then the crisp, pure air of the mornings and the soft, sweet zephyrs of the woodland nights. And the life of it all: the pleasant toil, the homely fare, the long, refreshing sleep of the cool nights, the honesty of it, the sweet reasonableness of it. That was something worth while. This scene which he had before him was hell.

And, besides all, each different scene of the forest and mountain, as it came before him, brought back inevitably the vision of a face, pure, fresh and radiant, the face of Valeska. What wonder that he arose, sick and disillusioned with all the meanness, the vice and the pettiness of these haunts of men, and sought his apartments, with the call of the wild appealing to him, and a half formed resolution to heed the call.

He spent another restless night and, falling asleep at daybreak, slept until noon. After breakfasting, he walked for an hour, all the time undecided; now making up his mind to return to the Adirondacks and again putting the scheme away from him as weak and fruitless.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and he was still arguing the matter with himself, when he chanced upon a fortunate omen. A wonderful thing it was, that it should happen at that particular moment, a most strange and

astonishing coincidence.

He had stopped in a hallway upon Fifth Avenue, to look at some photographs. He was glancing uninterestedly over the faces of a number of pretty women when suddenly he stared spellbound, while his heart seemed to come into his throat. Half way down the showcase, the face of a girl, more beautiful than any of the others, looked out at him with mocking eyes, and that face was the face of Valeska.

After gazing at the picture so long that he

was ashamed to be seen loitering there any longer, a deep and wicked plot took shape in his mind, and he went up the stairs into the photographer's studio. There were a number of people there, clerks or attendants and patrons of the place. He approached one of the former, a young man of eighteen or twenty, and asked him a number of questions about the prices of different sizes of photographs and the merits of different styles of finish; then he took him down to the street, ostensibly to show him some particular fashion of picture which he fancied. When he got him down there, he took from his pocket a ten dollar bill and put it into the young fellow's hand. Then he pointed to the likeness of Valeska.

"I suppose," said he, "you could get me one of that young lady's pictures, without much trouble, could you not?"

"Oh, no, it's against the rules, you know. I

couldn't think of it."

He looked at the bill lovingly.

"There are one or two other photographs of her, upstairs, in different poses. I will show them to you, if you like. And there are pictures too, of her sister or cousin, I don't know which it is. I think, myself, that she is handsomer than this one."

Keene followed the young man up stairs again, and was shown two other different likenesses of Valeska, and also three photographs of Cynthia. The attendant took them out of a

show case which rested upon the counter and handed them to him. Keene took up the pictures of Valeska and gazed fixedly upon them. Each one of them, as he looked at it, seemed the prettier. He glanced at the reverse side of the card and was astonished to see the name of Miss Cynthia Marwood written upon it, with the date of the sitting. He then looked at the backs of Cynthia's photographs and found that they were marked Miss Valeska Marwood.

"You have got the names mixed," said he to the young man. "These photographs marked Miss Cynthia Marwood should have been written Valeska Marwood, and vice versa."

"No," answered the attendant. "I know that they are labeled correctly. It was only a month ago that we had a duplicate order from Miss Valeska Marwood, and we sent her the photographs which you see marked with her name. I know all about it, for I sent them myself, and besides that, she paid for them afterwards. Which showed that I sent the right ones."

"Is there no other way by which you can prove, without question that they are marked correctly?"

"Certainly, I can look up the negatives and they will settle the matter without doubt."

The young man went into another room and

came back again in five minutes.

"The negatives are labeled just as these photographs are, so that ought to settle it."

"It seems so," said Keene.

As he spoke, he took out a yellow-backed bill and crumpled it up and thrust it into the attendant's vest pocket.

"That enlarged crayon picture upon the wall yonder," said he, "what would such a one

cost me?"

The young man looked in the direction indicated, and Arthur took the pictures which were labeled Miss Cynthia Marwood and thrust them into his inside coat pocket.

The attendant smiled shamefacedly.

"About twenty dollars," said he.

From the photographer's Keene went directly to his apartments. Here he sat down in an easy chair before the open window and, taking Cynthia's pictures from his pocket, regarded them long and delightedly. She had posed for them in different attitudes. In one she was sitting, with her elbow upon the arm of the chair and her chin supported by her hand; in the other, she was standing back of the chair and leaning upon it. She wore a large picture hat and her gown looked like the latest creation of Redfern or Reutlinger.

"So you are Cynthia and not Valeska," he soliloquised. I never liked the name of Valeska. There was aValeska once who was a lady friend of Napoleon Bonaparte. I am glad your name is Cynthia. I like the name better; it is more appropriate. 'Cynthia of the Woodland,' I will call you. Cynthia is another name

for Diana. Diana was the hunting goddess. When I first met you, you were the little huntress, and you are certainly a goddess. It is a strange thing that these two girls should have masqueraded, each under the name of the other. Why did they do it? Was it simply a nonsensical prank of two mischief-loving maidens, or was it done with a purpose, and, if so, what was that purpose? Probably something connected with the mysterious dwellers in the house of the stone quarry. There were a number of significant sayings and happenings which should have led me to make the discovery sooner. It was a suspicious thing that they should have called each other by name so frequently and pointedly, during the dinner; and the giggling of Martha. Yes, it is plain now why Martha giggled."

Arthur no longer hesitated. He had come to a resolution immediately upon finding Cynthia's picture. He would go back to the scenes of forest and mountain which he had left so precipitately the day before. More than that, he would take the very first train. He sent his man out for a time table, found that an Adirondack train left at eight o'clock at night, and had his things repacked and taken to the Grand Central Station. He had dinner that evening at the same restaurant which he had visited the night before, but he no longer slighted the repast. His possession of Cynthia's pictures seemed to him a happy omen. It was the next thing to having the girl herself, and he ate and

drank with a zest and relish which he had not

had for forty-eight hours.

It was seven o'clock upon the following morning when Keene alighted from his sleeping car at Glendale. He had his baggage taken to the Inn, and fortunately was able to secure the same comfortable rooms which he had re-

linquished two days before.

He could not, in decency, call upon the Marwoodsbeforeeleven o'clock. The time seemed to stand still, and those three or four hours seemed a week. As he walked up the hill towards the mansion, he noted the freshness and the invigorating quality of the air, the sky seemed bluer and softer, the valley more quietly beautiful, and the forest-clad mountains more picturesquely grand and hoary. He strode forward with a buoyant step and he was filled with all sorts of pleasurable anticipations.

The door was opened for him by the same maid who had admitted him upon his first visit to the house, but, alas, when he asked for the ladies, he was told that they were both away

from home.

"Miss Cynthia Marwood," said the girl to the disappointed youth, "is gone to the city and will return on to-morrow evening's train. Miss Marwood is also away, but I don't exactly know where she went. I only know that she said she would be back in time to meet her cousin."

Keene was turning away when suddenly a

thought came to him. He first resorted to his usual tactics, that is to say, he took a yellow-backed bank note from his pocket book and

handed it to the girl.

"When you say that Miss Cynthia has gone to the city, you mean Miss Valeska Marwood, Mr. Stephen Marwood's daughter, do you not?" Come now, you needn't hesitate, I know all about this change of names; but you mix me up horribly and I really want to know whether it was Miss Valeska or Miss Cynthia."

"Well, it was Miss Valeska, if you really insist on knowing," said the maid, blushing. "You must not say that I told you though."

As Arthur went away from the house, he told himself, first, that he was right in supposing that the little huntress, the girl with the dimple, was Cynthia, and second, that Cynthia was again paying a visit to the strange people in the glen. This last thought, as may well be imagined, did not please him at all.

# CHAPTER IX

# LEONARDO DA VINCI

A serious question now confronted Keene. How was he to kill the time between then and the afternoon or evening of the next day? He calculated that it would be all of thirty hours before he could hope to meet the illusive Cynthia once more, and never had thirty hours seemed such an eternity of time. One thing he might do, and the idea was certainly an alluring one. He would spend the afternoon exploring the Devil's Gorge, and trying to locate the fissure in the rocks where he had met with his mishap, and where he had been extricated from a perilous and awkward dilemma by the skill and presence of mind of the strangely attired and charming little Amazon.

He could reach the gorge, which had its beginning some four miles from Glendale, by following Otter Creek. By keeping to the left bank of the Creek, he would have a safe and accessible path to the very top of the gorge. At the same time, he would be able to scan the line of cliffs upon the opposite side, and it would be a strange thing if he should not be able to hit upon the exact spot where he had gotten into difficulty. This left-hand or western side was the one which old Nate had told him to follow,

and it certainly was the left-hand side, provided that one approached it from below. According to the old guide, the path was quite practicable, though somewhat rough and toilsome; in fact, when he had made that memorable descent of the ravine, he had noticed, as he, from time to time, cast his eyes across the creek, that the western bank of the stream was comparatively easy of passage throughout its whole length.

After dinner then, he clad himself in his woodsman's garb: Khaki jacket and breeches and heavy hobnailed shoes and, taking with him a stout beech wood stick or alpenstock, he set out upon his ascent of Otter Creek. In an hour and a half he arrived at the commencement of the gorge and now, keeping to the bottom of the ravine, alongside the stream, had no difficulty in finding a footing upon the stratum of rocks between the water and the walls of the cliff. The current of the stream each moment became swifter, the surroundings wilder and more picturesque, and his path steeper and more tiresome, though there was no obstacle of real importance to his progress.

When he had ascended the gorge to the distance of a mile and a half, the walls on both sides of him seemed to grow more familiar, and to have the character which they exhibited at the point where his progress had been stopped on the previous occasion, so that he began to look eagerly for the smaller glen or fissure,

which he remembered so well.

The cañon made somewhat of a turn at a spot some way ahead of him, and he pressed forward anxiously, supposing that this fissure would come into sight when he had turned the intervening corner of the cliff. He was not mistaken. When he had passed the angle of rocks, at a short distance ahead of him, yawned a cleft in the walls of the gulley which resembled, as far as he was able to tell, viewing it from underneath instead of from above, the one which he was in search of. It extended downward from the top of the precipice a matter of sixty or seventy feet, and its bottom was something more than a hundred feet above the spot where he stood. There was the small cascade also, which tumbled from it into the larger gorge, the water of which was changed to spray long before it reached the rocks below. The sun was now declining to the west and hung, like a ball of fire, just above the cliffs at his left hand, so that its rays, shining upon the crystal veil of falling water, threw an almost perfect rainbow upon the wet moss-grown wall of rock behind it.

Arthur was certain of his locality. He could not make out, however, from where he stood, the ledge upon which the apparition of Cynthia had first come to him, nor even the one upon which he had fallen in his attempt to clear the fissure. This, though might be merely a matter of perspective. The point where he expected to find them was fully a hundred and sixty feet

above him, and they might well be hidden by

the convexity of rock beneath.

He stood there a long while, looking upward and trying to convince himself that he was not mistaken in the locality. Growing tired, however, of this monotonous and uncomfortable occupation, he at last started again on his ascent, and, strange to say, when he had gone about a quarter of a mile farther, the cañon all the while having the same characteristics of size and scenery, he beheld another fissure, so like the first in every way, that he could not have told in which it was that those extraordinary events had happened. He could make out a ledge upon the upper left-hand-side of this one, but it did not seem, in other respects, familiar. Then, too, the upper walls of the cleft seemed, from his viewpoint, to approach each other so closely that he could have stepped from one to the other. It might have been an optical delusion, but he had crossed several of these narrow chasms in his memorable descent, and he now came to the conclusion that the lower fissure was the one he was in search of.

He soon, however, found himself again doubtful of the matter, for, during the next half mile of his ascent, he counted no less than half a dozen more of these cracks or openings, extending back from the main gorge. He recollected now that, on his descent toward Glendale, he had passed a number of these smaller fissures; several by leaping, while others were so wide

at their mouths that he had found it necessary to follow them up for some distance before they were narrow enough for him to cross. They were situated at such a height above him, and all had such a similarity of appearance, that he finally found himself completely confused and utterly unable to locate the particular spot which he had wished to find.

After an hour or so more of toilsome climbing, he at last emerged at the upper end of the great ravine. It was now toward evening, and, feeling somewhat spent with his arduous exertions, he sat down upon a huge boulder, which lay at the point where the dark and swift stream issued from the forest to commence its precipitous descent, and rested for a quarter hour, refreshing himself with some frugal provisions which he had brought from the Inn, washing down his repast with copious libations of the pure, cold water of the creek, and further solacing himself, for ten minutes, with the fragrant aroma of his pipe.

Deciding now to ascend the stream for some distance farther, he at once sprang up and proceeded to put his plan into execution. For some distance above, the black waters of the flood swept with great swiftness through the dense and overarching forest, and this part of his journey was no easy matter, as the ground was very rough and the undergrowth thick and stubborn. On account of these difficulties, and after he had proceeded for the distance of a half mile,

he concluded that he had had enough of it and it was time for him to return. As, however, he turned to retrace his steps along the stream, something happened which astonished him exceedingly and gave him much to think about for a considerable time.

He was engaged in forcing his way through a particularly thick and tangled piece of undergrowth. He was about twenty feet from the banks of the torrent, which at that part was very narrow and swept beneath the branches of the forest with great rapidity and violence. He suddenly heard a splashing sound, and, looking up, distinctly saw a man in a canoe shoot past him down the creek and vanish in an instant beneath the dark and impenetrable foliage.

At once the tales of old Nate recurred to his mind about the unfortunate and misguided men who had essayed to boat it down Otter Creek and who had been dashed to pieces or drowned in the attempt. But this individual whom he had caught a momentary glance of had passed the point of danger instanced by the guide and seemed to have his canoe well in hand, and a well-grounded doubt of the old man's veracity arose in Keene's mind as he remembered how Nate had hindered him from attempting this very thing by his lugubrious and fateful narratives. That which made the matter more surprising, however, and seemed to place Nate definitely in the ranks of the Ananias club, was the fact that, in his transient view of the man in the boat, it had struck him forcibly that it was none other than old Nate himself. The man had certainly borne an extraordinary resemblance to that worthy, and unless the guide had a double, which was, of all things, most impossible, Keene felt that he could not be mistaken.

When Keene arrived at the point where the Creek entered the gorge, he expected that he would find the old guide or at least, come upon his canoe, drawn upon the bank. Neither guide or canoe, however, was in evidence, and Keene decided that Nate had backed the boat into the woods.

It was much easier going down the gorge than going up, and Arthur found himself in a quarter of an hour opposite and beneath that fissure in the cliffs which he had first come to when ascending the ravine. He stopped and gazed upward for some minutes, striving to identify it as the place of his meeting with the fair nymph who had so completely bewitched him, then, just as he was turning to continue his descent, he distinctly saw, at the very top of the cleft, something white, as if it were a handkerchief, fluttering to and fro. He was standing upon the top of a rounded rock and, so intent was he in watching this singular phenomenon, that he forgot to preserve his balance, and was forced to leap sideways and into a pool of water, to keep from taking a header. When he again straightened himself and looked upward toward the fissure, the handkerchief, if handkerchief it

was, had vanished.

For fully ten minutes he looked in vain for a reappearance of that white something; then he gave it up and went on his way down the gorge. When, however, he had proceeded some five hundred feet further, he perceived a small white object lying upon a rock in the very middle of the turbulent stream. It looked like a small square of linen.

"The wind carried it out of her hand," thought he. "Perhaps she dropped it purposely and the wind brought it here. Great Cæsar! if it were only so. It must have sailed down while I was giving that exhibition of acrobatics. I'll have to get it, if I swim for it. I'm about as

wet as I can be anyway."

He proceeded at once to the undertaking; leaping from stone to stone, until a single stretch of swiftly rushing water, some eight feet in width, separated him from his goal. He was thinking what to do next, when, suddenly, he slipped from the wet and slimy boulder, upon which he stood, and plunged down into the creek up to his middle. Fortunately he landed on his feet and was able to keep his balance. It was "In for a penny, in for a pound." So he braced himself against the weight of the torrent and, with a few steps, attained the coveted object.

It was indeed a lady's handkerchief, and a costly and dainty one at that, made of the finest cambric, with an insertion of lace around the border. As he picked it up, he became aware of the faintest suspicion of a delicate and peculiar perfume, a perfume which had appealed to his fancy more than once during the preceding three or four days. He took the two photographs of Cynthia from his pocket, folded the handkerchief about them and replaced them in his coat. He should certainly have put the package immediately over his heart, but his inside pocket was, as inside pockets always are, upon the right-hand side.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when he returned to the Inn, and almost ten when he had changed his water-soaked garments to dry ones and had eaten supper. He was conscious of a delightful exaltation as he thought of Cynthia. She had signaled to him with her handkerchief and, it was just possible, that she had purposely dropped it; thus sending him, in a manner, a token or message. More trifling things than that will often raise a lover to the seventh Heaven of delight.

Before he realized fairly what he was doing, he was strolling once more in the direction of the Marwood Mansion. When he gained the gate of the garden, he turned in, meaning to while away an hour or so in the pavilion, where he might dream without interruption and to his heart's content, of the one girl.

When he had come within fifty feet of the little summer house, he perceived that there was someone standing within it, and he stepped to

one side, in the shadow of a thick lilac bush, where he might see without being seen. The full moon had just arisen above the tree tops of the horizon, so that he had no difficulty in identifying the intruder. It was the fisherman of the glen, the young man whose profile he had seen upon the shade of the library window.

He was engaged in the curious occupation of fixing something, which resembled a sheet of note paper, to one of the posts or columns of the pavilion. After he had accomplished this task, he raised a pair of eye glasses and regarded the paper intently for a minute or two, as if it were covered with writing and he were reading it. Then he walked briskly out of the garden, passing close to the spot where Keene was concealed. In a moment more, there came the sound of the exhaust of a motor and Arthur wondered where it had been hidden, and why he had not noticed it, as he came along the road by the garden fence. He was now filled with curiosity to know the secret of the young man's strange proceeding, and, entering the summer house, he found a sheet of note paper pinned upon the inside of one of its pillars. It was covered neatly with writing in a small and careful hand, and though the dim light of the moon made it rather difficult to decipher, Arthur succeeded in making out the following:

"I think of thee when morning sends
Its first pale light across the skies;
At noon-time, and when night descends,

Thine image steals before mine eyes.

I think of times when thou didst love me,
When softly comes the twilight hour,
I see thee in each star above me,
In every cloud, in every flower."

"And when I sleep, 'tis but to dream
That thy dear form is hovering near.
I hear thy voice, thine accents seem
To whisper fondly in mine ear.
I wake, the night is dark and lonely,
Thy voice is mute, thy form has fled;
The murmuring night winds whisper only
Of vanished hopes, long past and dead."

"This," said Arthur, "is in the nature of a serenade, only, his inamorata being absent, he does not sing it, but writes it down and pins it to a post. This gentleman being here to-night is, for me, a most happy and auspicious augury. It was a most fortunate thing that I took it into my head to come this way. His love affair is with Valeska, and not with Cynthia. Ergo, it was Valeska, whose shadow I saw upon the curtain. If it were Cynthia, would he be here, tacking up serenades, while Cynthia was at the house in the glen? I see now that he is a very decent sort, whereas, before to-night, I thought him but little better than a pirate or highway robber. I hope he gets her, though his poem ends with an air of discouragement. Valeska is a girl whom any man might fall in love with. There is certainly something very lovely about She has a peculiar and indescribable charm, but still, she is not Cynthia. I am sorry that I do not know the man's name. I think of him, in an indefinite way, as the fisherman of the glen, the man of the shadow, or the poet and painter. I must invent a name for him. Michael Angelo was both an artist and a poet, and so was Leonardo da Vinci. I will call him Leonardo.

Just then, Arthur, who had seated himself in one of the pavilion chairs, felt something rub against his trousers. He looked down and found that it was the cat, Thomas à Becket.

"He knows that I love his mistress," mused Arthur, "I am evidently persona grata with Tommy, and I can no longer say that he shows a preference for Leonardo."

Tommy looked up wistfully at Keene and miaowed, and Keene, interpreting the feline language correctly, took Tommy into his lap and made much of him.

# CHAPTER X

# IN THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Having arisen at six o'clock upon the following morning, Keene breakfasted, and at once set himself to the arduous task of getting through the eight or ten hours which still separated him from Cynthia. He felt that he could not await her coming in idleness. Something in the way of strenuous action was absolutely necessary. He therefore started out for another all day tramp, intending to ascend a mountain which raised its blue crest five or six miles to the northeast of the village.

It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon when he arrived at its base, and it took him an hour to scale its rough gorge-seamed, pine-covered sides and arrive upon its summit. He had, however, provided himself with a small quantity of food and a large quantity of tobacco, he had the day before him, and, as the view which he now enjoyed was more grand and beautiful than anything of the kind which he had before imagined, he felt amply repaid for his pains.

The eminence from which he looked was probably two thousand feet in height, and the country lay spread before his view for fifteen or twenty miles in all directions. It seemed as if he were standing upon an apex in the center

of a gigantic basin, this being the effect which one always experiences in viewing the surrounding territory from a great elevation. All along the horizon on the north and east there seemed to stretch a continuous chain of blue, forestcovered mountains, broken here and there by some higher peak or ridge, which raised its hazy top above its fellows. He counted no less than a score of silvery ponds and lakes, set, like mirrors or like diamonds, deep down among the shaggy forest, and connected with each other, for the most part, by blue winding rivers and rivulets which sparkled here and there in the sunlight, as they emerged into the more open places of the woods. On the west and south, where the country was for the most part cleared, the landscape was checkered with squares of green pastures, of cornfields and yellow grain, and the whole scene was spread out before him so clearly and seemed so still and peaceful, with the distance, that it was like a painted landscape.

The view of this wonderful panorama of the Adirondacks was not, however, the only inducement which led Keene to make the arduous ascent of the mountain. It was to one particular part of the country to which he bent his gaze. In fact, it seemed as if he had done this immense amount of climbing with the sole object of getting a comprehensive and unobstructed view of one locality,—namely, the vicinity of the great ravine of Otter Creek, called the Devil's Gorge.

He could not have found a better point from

which to observe it. The altitude upon which he stood was so much greater, that it could be plainly discerned running for a mile or two into the chain of hills which, in the west, formed the opposite wall of the immense basin in which he stood. It seemed to be distant from him about four miles and about the same distance from the village of Glendale, which could be plainly seen nestling down among the hills to the south.

He had provided himself with a small but powerful field glass, and with its aid he now was certain that he perceived the cleft which marked the smaller gorge or glen, which had played such an important part in the history of the last four days, and which now, on account of the actual presence there of Cynthia, was rendered twice as interesting as before. It did not seem to run at right angles with the larger gorge, except for a little distance from its mouth, where it took a sudden turn to the south and extended for the rest of its length, as far as he could now see, almost parallel to the larger cañon.

In the event of any one seeking to discover it, by approaching through the forest, this made it a much more difficult undertaking. If it had extended at right angles from the larger gorge, one would only have to follow up the right-hand side of the latter, keeping several hundred feet from the edge of the cliffs, and he eventually would strike it. As it was, it was a very different matter. It was impossible to come within any reasonable distance of the precipice on the right-hand side, and Keene saw that he would have to rely on other indications, and leave the Devil's Gorge entirely out of the question, in looking for it; always supposing that he intended such a thing; which was now, as he firmly said to himself, entirely distant from his mind.

He could not help, however, making several observations of the way the land lay between the village and the wonderful glen, and calculating therefrom the direction which it would be necessary to take in order to arrive at it; and the conclusion which he came to was that he would have a very reasonable chance of success.

It was half past two in the afternoon when Keene set out to descend the mountain and return to the village. He stepped steadily along upon the trail for an hour and a half and, probably had accomplished half of the distance, when the sound of voices fell upon his ear: the voices of a man and of a woman. The voice of the woman was sweet and clear and aroused at once an answering echo in his heart. He now looked to the right, toward a spot perhaps a hundred feet distant, where there seemed to be a clearing in the forest, and beheld two persons, both of whom he knew, and whose appearance together filled him with unlimited astonishment.

One of them was the little huntress, attired in her short-skirted gray corduroy shooting dress and her small cap with the feather, and the other—no, he could hardly be deceived, was the

old guide, Nate Sawyer.

To assure himself to a certainty that he was not mistaken, he approached to within fifty feet of where they were standing. To do this, he had to circle a large clump of undergrowth, so that, for the moment, he lost sight of them. When he came within range of vision again, Nate, if it were really he, had disappeared, and

Cynthia was coming toward him.

She saw him when she was yet some way off, and did not seem to be at all astonished at meeting him. Nor was she at all vexed, as she was laughing when he joined her. She gave him her hand. Arthur noticed the cool softness of it, and perhaps held it a litle longer than was necessary. He looked at her face as if he were ravenously hungry and about to make a meal of her. She would have been a very simple and guileless girl, had she not known at once that he was head over heels in love with her. Most women know these things by intuition, without having had experience. Cynthia knew, though whether from intuition or experience, does not appear.

"Do you know," said he, "that you remind me of Rosalind in the forest of Arden?"

"Do I," glancing down at her frock and small russet shoes with a sorrowful air. "That is too bad. But you see I am really not like Rosalind. I am wearing a skirt and it is not so very, very short, either."

"I meant that you looked to me as Rosalind

looked to Orlando."

"But Orlando didn't know that the person

in boy's clothing was Rosalind."

"That is all nonsense, and put in to help out the action of the play. Having once seen her face, and being in love with her, is it at all likely that he did not see through her disguise? Do you suppose I would not know you under similar circumstances?"

"I can't say, but I know that you will never

have the chance to experiment."

"By the by, I saw Rosalind talking with

Touchstone a few minutes ago."

"Oh, you mean the old guide. He is quite a character, and I often meet him in this neighborhood. Do you know the man?"

"Yes, I know him well; that is, I am not mistaken in his identity. Was it not Nate

Sawyer?"

"I think that he told me once that his name was Nate or something of that kind, but I never knew his last name. He's a curious old fellow, but very good-natured, and would go out of his way at any time to serve me. In fact, he has done me two or three small favors already, and we have got to be quite good friends."

"Did he have his bow with him?"

"His bow? Whatever do you mean? He had a rifle with him and nothing else."

"I mean his long bow. He usually has one with him and draws it with skill and frequency."

"There you do him foul injustice. I have known Nate, as you call him, for many months and I will stake my all upon his honor and truthfulness."

"Evidently," said Keene with conviction, "we are not talking about the same man at all."

"Evidently," said Cynthia.

"Do you say that you often meet the man in this vicinity?" asked Arthur, after a pause.

"Yes, perhaps a dozen times a month; but

there's nothing strange about that, is there?"

Keene considered the matter for a moment. If it were indeed Nate whom he had just seen with the girl, it would be very strange indeed, for the greater part of the time he was busily plying his vocation upon the other side of the Adirondacks, seventy-five or a hundred miles away. No, the person whom he had just seen could not have been he, and yet, the man in the canoe had very much the appearance of the old guide, and it would be a strange matter if there were two men living of such a decidedly peculiar appearance.

"Yes, it would be very strange, Miss Marwood, if it were the man of whom I was talking, and I am very much interested in knowing for a certainty if it was actually he. How did you

come to fall in with him first?"

Cynthia hesitated before answering.

"I see no reason for not answering that question," said she, after a moment, "it will make no difference in the long run." "The fact is," she continued, somewhat confused, "I first met the man near the waterfall at the head of the glen; the point where you came out of the ravine, after stopping for the night at the house in the stone-quarry. He had discovered the secret which I had to lay bare to you. I was ignorant of how much he knew, but I had to make friends with him and take him, to a certain extent, into my confidence. I had to tell him things"—here she hesitated,—"which I did not tell you. When you were here of course, I had no knowledge of your being such a paragon of honor and fidelity."

She gave Keene a mischievous glance from her dark eyes, as he bowed low in acknowledg-

ment of the compliment.

"That was months ago. I had no claim upon him whatever, but he has been most loyal and faithful, and I regard him now as a friend

whom, if necessary, I can trust implicitly.

"I am getting horribly jealous of the old chap," said Arthur. "Isn't there some one else nearer by, whom you can trust and rely upon and all that sort of thing? I am a candidate for just such a position."

"How are your references from your last place?" she asked maliciously, then she changed the subject, and asked with an imperious tone:

"Where have you been, sir, since I last saw you?"

"I have been to New York."

"But why did you leave so abruptly?"

"I left because my remaining any longer would have been dangerous for my peace of mind."

"Valeska is certainly a charming and beautiful girl and I do not wonder that you felt that way about her."

"It wasn't Valeska."

"A number of young men have gone distracted on her account."

"It wasn't Valeska."

"If that was the reason for your going away, what was the reason for your coming back so soon?"

"The same thing that took me away brought me back."

"I suppose you mean the train."

"No, I came back because I couldn't stay

away."

"Well, I hope you bought an excursion ticket. I saw by a poster in the railroad station that they were selling two day excursions to New York and return for one and one half the regular fare. You were only gone two days and I love to see a young man save his money."

"How do you know that I was only away for

two days?"

"Because I saw you yesterday afternoon."

"Where was I when you saw me?"

"You were in the Devil's Gorge, standing upon a stone and looking up into the heavens."

"Then what?"

"Then you gave a spring and landed in a pool of water. I thought you were practising some kind of athletic exercise. It was certainly very amusing."

"Then it was you who waved the handker-

chief to me from the top of the cliff?"

"You conceited fellow. I was dusting off my jacket with it, when the wind carried it away. By the by, what was it that you wrapped up so carefully in the handkerchief?"

"Oh, some small trifles, which I value quite

highly."

"I saw what they were. They were two

cabinet-sized photographs."

"You have remarkably good eye sight to see that at a distance of five hundred feet."

"Whose pictures were they?"

"The pictures of a girl." "Both of the same girl?"

"Yes, the same girl."

"Any relative, or perhaps she is your fianceé?"

"I wish she were."

"How long have you known her?"
"Only a few days."

"I suppose she gave them to you."

"No, I stole them, well, it amounts to the same thing. I was walking along Fifth Avenue and chanced to see them in Falconi's show window. Then I went in and succeeded in corrupting one of the clerks or attendants and so brought them away with me."

"That was a very disreputable thing to do.

How could you do it?"

"Because I was frightfully in love with the girl, and all is fair in love and war."

"And yet you have only known her a few

days. Such love as that soon cools."

"Mine doesn't cool. Every time I see her it increases amazingly. Besides that it grows wonderfully between times."

"The girl must be a paragon of perfection.

Would you mind telling me who she is?"

"I wouldn't mind, but I am not absolutely certain what her name is."

"What, you do not know the girl's name?"

"Not really and truly. You see, I supposed that her name was so and so, and, when I looked at the backs of the pictures, I found there a name which I supposed was that of her cousin."

"Still, I suppose that you are now reasonably

sure of her name?"

"Yes, Cynthia, I think that I am."

"Do you know what you called me then?"

"Of course I do. I haven't made a mistake,

have I? Isn't that your name?"

"Yes, that is my name. I may as well own up to it. But are you in the habit of addressing young ladies by their first names after you have known them for three or four days?"

"No, I am not, but this is different. My

excuse for doing it is the same as my excuse for getting possession of the pictures. But Cynthia, tell me, why did you and your cousin mystify me by masquerading under the wrong names?"

"There you go again. You are certainly a very bold person, and, were I to serve you right, I would not answer your question. However, I will be good and tell you this much: There was a proper and substantial reason for it. More I cannot tell you now, but you will probably know in time."

Her eyes now lost their mocking look, the smile disappeared from her pretty face and she became, all at once, pensive and troubled.

became, all at once, pensive and troubled.

"I must tell you," said she, "that I am awfully worried just now about something which I heard from that old guide. He has certainly constituted himself my guardian angel. Why he takes such an interest in me I do not know. If you see to-night, that my wits have gone woolgathering and that I seem to have a fit of the blues, you will know the reason and make allowances."

"But I do not know the reason, Cynthia, dear. Can you not tell me, and let me do the worrying? I am great at worrying, that is to say, for other people. Tell me then what troubles you and let me attend to it."

"No, you foolish fellow, I can't tell you and, more than that, if I should tell you, you could

not help matters any."

She smiled at him, showing the dimple in

her cheek, but, a moment afterward, it seemed to him that her dark eyes were unduly moist, as if the tears had gathered there. His heart was filled with conflicting emotions, love, doubt, uncertainty and jealousy. He could easily see that his fair companion was filled with sadness, and he would have given all that he possessed to remove the cause of her woe.

It was nearly six o'clock in the evening.

They had been walking through the forest during their conversation, and they had now come to a point a short way above the mill, which stood a quarter of a mile above the

village.

"I do not wish to pass the mill and traverse the village just now," said she, "I always take another path when I come from—you know where. This path is over to the right. So I will leave you here. I suppose you will wish to go to the Inn, but be sure to come up to the house to-night at eight o'clock, as I want you to go with me to the station to meet Valeska."

Keene promised with unnecessary vehemence. He watched her trim form as she tripped along the path, until, at length, she vanished

over a slight eminence.

"The dear girl," he soliloquized, "there is something on her mind. I wish I knew what it was. Damn, I would like to smash the person or persons who are the cause of it. She never asked me for the photographs or the handkerchief. I couldn't have given them up anyway,

but she was awfully sweet and good about it. Cynthia, when she had gained her chamber, flung herself into an easy chair by the window. She clasped her hands over her bosom, and gazed straight before her with an ecstatic look of bliss in her eyes.

### CHAPTER XI

# THE CRUISE OF THE LORELEI

Keene arrived at the Marwood Mansion promptly at eight o'clock, and found the touring car drawn up in front of the porch. As the maid opened the door for him, Cynthia came tripping down the stairway, fully attired for the short run to the railway station. She took her place at the steering wheel, Arthur cranked the engine and stepped into the car beside her. This time there was no objection. She even welcomed him to the seat next her with a smile.

"William the Despot," said she, "has returned from the city, with that cog or pinion, whatever it was that he went after, and has kindly permitted me to use the car. He even offered to drive, but, as I saw that he had brought something else with him from town besides the cog,

I thought it wiser to drive myself."

In a few minutes they arrived at the station. When the train came in, which was but a moment later, Arthur helped Valeska down, and the two girls fell into each other's arms and kissed as if they had been separated for a year. Valeska now turned and spoke to Keene:

"How do you do, Mr. Keene. I thought that you were in New York. I am very glad

that you have returned."

Arthur answered her, and, in doing so, addressed her by name. She turned to Cynthia, with a questioning look.

"Yes, he knows," said Cynthia. "It is all

right though."

When they were seated in the library and Valeska was nibbling a sandwich and sipping a cup of tea, she turned to Cynthia and said slowly:

"Featherstone was on the train to-night."

Cynthia made it seem by her manner that this announcement was most unwelcome.

"Oh, dear, is that so? Did he try to sit with

you?"

"No, I gave him no chance."

On the few occasions when Valeska roused herself to speech, she used as few words as possible. She would have made the ideal wife, in the opinion of many men.

"Tell me, Val dear, how did you manage

with him."

"When he entered my car he found me asleep, with my feet upon the only vacant chair near me."

"Mr. Featherstone," said Keene, "does not seem to be especially popular in the present assemblage. May I ask who the gentleman is?"

"He is an agent or superintendent for my uncle," answered Cynthia. "An English young man who has, I firmly believe, left his country for his country's good. He is evidently well bred and, in fact, he boasts that he is the rightful heir to a barony, or a baronetcy, I do not re-

member which. At such times he calls himself Featherstonehaugh. He went away from here several weeks ago and I am very, very sorry to hear that he has come back. He drinks and does other nefarious things, and he is a cad, a bounder and a beast. Now you know all about him."

"Your description is so exact, concise and to the point, that I certainly know a lot about him. I can see him in my mind's eye bounding and bounding like a kangaroo. But, tell me, why

should you put up with him at all?"

"Because he comes here often on business, more often, I think, than is necessary. Uncle Stephen had introduced him to us and has even had him to dinner. Uncle says that we exaggerate his shortcomings and that he is no worse than the average young man. I even think that the wretch would make love to us if we allowed him to."

"Can you always keep men from making love to you, when you wish?" asked Arthur

innocently.

Cynthia was about to answer, when it came to her that there might be something personal in his question. Instead of speaking, she smiled and turned away.

"I am not afraid of his making love to me," said Valeska. "Cynthia is the one whom he

adores."

"That is partly the truth," said Cynthia. "I own to the unenviable distinction of being the

favorite. I am put to my wits' end to avoid him; so that sometimes, like Marianna, 'I am a-weary, and wish that I were dead.'"

Arthur said nothing, but his teeth came together, his jaws became rigid, and his fists were clenched until the nails hurt him. As Valeska was evidently fatigued by her journey, he now arose to go; it being arranged that he and the two girls should take the motor boat upon the morrow, and sail down the river; their destination being left to the whim of the moment. Keene voted that they go in quest of the golden fleece. Cynthia was for Utopia, and Valeska thought that she would be satisfied with the Lotus Islands.

When Keene and the girls were standing in the hallway previous to his taking his departure, he noticed, though not for the first time, an oldfashioned spinning wheel which stood upon the landing, half way up the stair. It was a curious relic of the past, and very different from others which he had seen, as it had two pirns instead of one, and the platform or bench was level, instead of being tilted to an angle of twenty or thirty degrees, as in other spinning wheels. He asked to inspect it, and Cynthia took him up to the landing, and explained its peculiarities and its modus operandi.

"It is well worth looking at," said she. "There is none other like it, and it has a history, and its history, like that of the old clock on the stair, has been told in verse. Would you like

to hear it?"

Arthur was loath to leave the girl, and welcomed the delay which the recital of the poem would bring about.

"I would like nothing better," said he.

"Valeska, you recite it to him," said Cynthia. They now went back into the drawing room. Valeska took a book from the table, and, drawing from it a leaf of faded note paper, read as follows:

#### THE OLD SPINNING-WHEEL

"Through the intricate maze of its pulleys and wheels, And its oaken frame, a vision steals
Of the long gone years, of the hands that are still,
And the elm-shaded house at the foot of the hill,
Where the child, round-cheeked and wond'ring-eyed,
Watched the old wheel buzz at the ingleside,
With a sound like a far-off muffled drum,
In its clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum.

"Years come and go; on the porch it stands,
And the pirns fly round 'neath a fair girl's hands;
She watches the sunset's fading rays,
With a far-off, girlish, fanciful gaze
Till the rose steals into her dimpled cheek,
And the garrulous spinning-wheel seems to speak
Her foolish thoughts to Christendom
With its clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum.

"Still time speeds on; 'tis a winter's night,
The hearth fire is circled with faces bright,
There is laughter and jest, and the storm, in vain,
Beats on the door and the frosted pane.
And the wheel spins round with a measured rhyme,
Like a quaint refrain of the old, glad time,

With a presage of sorrowful days to come; In its clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum.

"Its voice oft brought the sick child rest, And lightened many a weary breast; Beneath its song the whispered word And kiss of lovers passed unheard. If it could speak, that strange old wheel What wonderful secrets it would reveal! What romance is hid in the weary sum Of its clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum.

"It had its influence and its share
In every joy and every care;
Fast, fast it flew, yet with swifter rate,
Spun round and round, the wheel of fate.
They fashioned out of its woven thread
The dress of the bride and the sheet for the dead,
And the wheel went round, though the heart grew numb,
With a clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum.

"All are vanished and all are still,
And the spinning-wheel by the clattering mill
Has been left behind with the primitive days
Of homelier toil and more honest ways;
Yet, oft through the night, and out of the gloom
And the gathered dust of the lumber room,
Its song, like a ghost's voice, seems to come,
With its clickety, whir-r, whir-r, hum."

When Keene had returned to the hotel, and was passing through the Inn office or reading room, on his way to his chamber, he had his first glimpse of Featherstone. He was a young man of twenty-eight or thirty, blue-eyed and with a long, silken yellow moustache. He had evidently been a handsome man in his early

youth, but now his eyes were bloodshot, his skin pasty, and he had generally an air of dissipation and degeneracy. Keene was inclined to stop then and there and chastise him, but thought better of it.

When Keene called at the house the next morning, Valeska and Cynthia appeared clad in yachting costumes, of trim and sailor-like fit and design; the one being of blue and red, and the other of white and blue. As they now started upon their way to the boat house, which stood upon the banks of the river, Valeska tarried upon the porch to give some final directions to the maid; so that Arthur and Cynthia were left alone for a moment.

"I am still thinking of the old spinningwheel in the hall," said Keene. "I never have seen anything so curious and ancient."

"It has been in our family for over a hundred

years," said Cynthia.

"May I ask the name of the author of the poem or legend which Valeska recited?"

"It was written by a friend, who wishes to

remain anonymous."

"Did this same friend compose the poem of the Haunted House?"

Cynthia looked at him for a moment, and

hesitated.

"Yes," said she finally.

"Leonardo must be a man of various accomplishments."

Keene spoke thoughtlessly. He had invented

this name himself, in order to have a tangible designation for the young man whom he had seen in the summer house. He was vexed at having made such a blunder, and expected, naturally, that Cynthia would be mystified and puzzled by this remark. Instead of being so, however, she answered, in a matter-of-fact way:

"They were not written by him. He doesn't

know a rhymed quatrain from blank verse."

It is putting it mildly to say that Arthur was astonished. So there really was a Leonardo. In inventing the name, he had curiously blundered upon the name of an acquaintance of the girls. Who and what was he? What a remarkable coincidence! Here was another mystery in this more than mysterious family of the Marwoods.

He would have liked to ask about this Leonardo, but Cynthia had treated the subject of the poems with a certain reserve and he felt that he was upon dangerous ground and forbore to question her further.

When they had arrived at the boat house, and had opened the doors and got the motor boat out upon the river, Keene noticed that her name, in brass letters upon the bow, was *The Lorelei*. He spoke of this to the girls and added:

"Ich weiss nicht vas soll es bedeuten,

Dass Ich so traurig bin."

"I was waiting for you to say that," said Cynthia, who was sitting upon the front deck, and pushing the boat away from the dock with a pike-pole. "Almost every one does, when he first remarks the name. It is astonishing how many people have read Heine's poem. It must have been a sine qua non at all preparatory schools."

"There is another stanza of it which I might also quote with great propriety," said Arthur as he gazed admiringly at the graceful girl, "and that is this:

> "Die schoenste Jungfrau sitzet Dort oben wunderbar."

"I see that you have committed the whole

poem to memory," answered Cynthia.

The motor boat Lorelei was a craft about forty feet in length, with a narrow, racing hull, and a stern shaped like a torpedo boat. She had a standing, canopy top, and her engine was of three cylinders and placed near the stern. In the cockpit were several wickerwork cushioned chairs and she combined all the essentials of comfort with a speed of fifteen or sixteen miles an hour.

Cynthia took the steering wheel, Keene threw over the balance wheel of the engine and the boat started with a rush. Valeska reclined luxuriously in her favorite chair, into which she had arranged some extra pillows. Her face had a look of dreamy and charming contentment, and she seemed the picture and embodiment of sweetness and amiability.

The Lorelei sped forward with the swiftness of an arrow; throwing off to either side a cas-

cade of spray from her sharp cutwater, and sending a long, unbroken ridge or wave of water diagonally behind to both shores, where they created a turbulent swaying and bending among the reeds and water grasses. A constantly changing and beautiful panorama flew back on either side of them; cornfields and meadows and pastures with grazing cows, and ploughed lands and orchards. Now and then they would pass through dark, mystic-looking forests, filled with swamps and fallen trees, and here and there they would come to a solitary farm house, and a dog would run forth and bark at them, or children would pause in their play and gaze at them, wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Sometimes, the river would seem to come to an end a short distance ahead of them. Then, just as they thought to run into a barrier of bank and trees, they would turn sharply to the left or right, and a new vista would open out before them.

It was a delightful day. A few white, fleecy clouds floated slowly across the soft blue sky; the air, as it blew into their faces, was crisp and fresh and cool. Each shifting of the scenery contained a new interest, and all these things, together with the sense of power, the swiftness of motion, the joyous freedom of it, made life seem worth living. Most of those who have tried both will say that a sail in a fast motor boat is worth more than all the automobile runs

that were ever made.

At noon they made the Lorelei fast to a great,

wide-spreading, elm tree which grew at the water's edge, and Cynthia and Valeska, who had brought with them a well filled basket of provisions brought to light, from one of the lockers a collapsible table, and opened it up and spread upon it a delicate and dainty repast. There was ginger ale and apollinaris for the thirsty, and the food was fit for the palates of the gods. Keene, however, though he had never had a better appetite, for the most part of the time forgot to eat; being engaged in the pleasing occupation of looking at Cynthia's face. school girl of fourteen could have told how it was with him. Valeska, now and then, would turn away from them with a smile, one of those sweet and evanescent smiles which vanished about as quickly as it came.

It was well in the afternoon when they began the return voyage. Arthur noted the fact that now and then the river was quite shallow, and with a bottom of jagged boulders, over which they glided with a very small margin of safety. "Aren't you ever afraid of striking upon the

rocks?" he asked.

"Not at all," answered Cynthia. "I know every rock in the river, for the simple reason that I have hit them all at one time or another. I can say, however, with just pride, that I never have hit the same rock twice. Some malevolent persons say that I try to take the boat cross lots. I will leave it to you if that is true."

"What happens when you hit a rock?"

"All kinds of things. It knocks the brass blades from the propeller wheel; the engine commences to race, and sometimes it bends the shaft out of true. When this happens near a bridge, it is an easy matter to repair the damage. We have a powerful differential pulley block in one of the lockers, which we hook on to the bridge, so that we can hoist the stern of the boat out of water, and screw a new pair of blades into the hub of the propeller. Some people say that we should take a bridge along with us. All these ill-natured remarks I, of course, treat with the lady-like scorn which they deserve."

They arrived at the boat house without mishap and with ample time in which to dress for dinner. That night they sat again until a late hour in the summer house of the garden. Valeska had brought a guitar from the house, and played upon it, in a charming manner, a number of quaint Spanish and Mexican serenades and dances. She also accompanied Cynthia, who sang, in a low, sweet, plaintive tone, a little love song, in which the moon played an important part.

Filled with the witchery of the soft, summer night, and the words of the music, and the presence of the adored one, Arthur found that, somehow, he was holding Cynthia's hand, which was resting upon the arm of her chair. The cool, firm softness of it sent a delightful thrill through him, but, after a moment, she withdrew it, though there was no apparent haste in the action.

When Keene presented himself, the following morning, at the Marwood house, he was informed by the maid that Miss Valeska was indisposed and lying down, and that Miss Cynthia had gone from home and would not return until the next day.

The young man turned away from the door, filled with astonishment, and horribly vexed by

this stroke of misfortune.

"This makes three times in a week," he mused, "that she has gone to the house in the glen. Why could she not have told me of her intention? It was certainly most unkind of her. There must be some powerful attraction there, or possibly they may have some nefarious hold

upon her. I hate the thought of either."

A serious problem confronted him: How was he to pass the time until her return. He longed for the sight of her. Her presence had become indispensable to him. He finally made up his mind to go fishing. There was a likely trout stream which emptied into Otter Creek about two miles above the village and which came from somewhere in the hills to the northeast. Its head waters must lie within a mile of the entrance to the old stone quarry. Perhaps this fact decided him in his choice of fishing grounds. He would be comparatively near her. He went to the Inn, drew on a pair of rubber boots which came to the thigh, provided himself

with the necessary accourrements and, within the hour, was wading up the stream in question, and casting his fly ahead of him upon its waters.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, having had indifferent luck, he came to where the brook widened out into a beautiful little lake, about a quarter of a mile in diameter, set like a mirror, deep down in the hollow formed by the hills. He went down the declivity to the shores of the pond, and, sitting upon a great log which lay half in and half out of the water, spent some time in contemplating it. The water was placid and clear as crystal; around it was an unbroken fringe or hedge of green forest, reproduced within the mirror-like surface of the water with an astonishing exactness. Fully half the surface of the lake was covered with the floor-like leaves of the water-lily, upon which walked a number of sand-pipers, tipping their tails up and down and uttering their plaintive and peculiar cry.

All at once there was a crackling in the bushes to his right. The sound seemed to come from a sort of gulley which ran down between two hills to the lake. The noise continued for several seconds and aroused his curiosity to a high degree. He had fixed his eyes upon the locality from which the sounds proceeded, when suddenly, out from the underbrush, burst, like a meteor, a graceful and beautiful red deer, and ran into the waters almost before Keene realized what it was, swimming in a straight line and

with extraordinary swiftness toward the other side of the lake.

There came more crackling in the bushes, and out darted a small fox terrier dog, coming so close to the young man that he almost ran into him. He was about to follow the deer into the water, when suddenly, he saw Keene, and at once a great change came over him. It seemed as if he knew that he was breaking the game laws, for he stopped, his head and his tail went down, and he showed all the signs of shame and confusion. Arthur called him and he came at once, wagging his tail and looking upward with a sort of deprecating look which was laughable. Arthur examined his collar and found upon a brass plate the initials, "C. M." It was undoubtedly the dog for whom he had suggested the name of "Henry the Second."

Just then a shrill whistle sounded in the

Just then a shrill whistle sounded in the forest from the direction whence had come the deer and the dog. The terrier started off to retrace his steps, but at a short distance away paused and looked back at the man as if expecting or wishing that he should follow him. It is unnecessary to say that Arthur accepted the invitation and immediately set off after his in-

telligent and friendly guide.

Ever and anon his new four-footed acquaintance would turn his head to see if the young man was coming along all right, and so they proceeded for a furlong or two. The terrier now began to bound and wag his tail and to give other manifestations of pleasure, and Keene, presently looking up, saw, a few rods beyond him, sitting upon the prone trunk of a great tree, the well known and enchanting figure of the votary and namesake of Diana, his Cynthia of the Woodland.

# CHAPTER XII

# CYNTHIA RESOLVES TO STAY SINGLE

Her jaunty gray costume had now given place to a plainly cut frock of black material, which emphasized the ivory white of her neck, and she was sitting there, her chin upon her hand, in a thoughtful, preoccupied attitude. Her straw hat lay upon the trunk beside her, her dark, luxuriant hair was caught up and wound upon her head in a simple coil, and her pensive face seemed paler and sadder than when he had seen her last.

She did not observe him at first, but was taken up with the dog, which ran to her and shoved its nose against her unoccupied hand. He was evidently not in the good graces of his mistress, for she struck him twice or thrice lightly upon the head, exclaiming as she did so:

"There! take that and that! You would chase that poor deer, would you? I don't like you

any more. You are a bad boy."

The terrier immediately sat up and begged, with an appealing look in his eyes.

"No, you are a bad boy, a bad boy."

The dog began to whine.

"A bad, bad boy."

The terrier now gave utterance to a prolonged howl of grief.

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"No, you are a good boy, a good boy."

The animal at once fell upon all fours, and

danced about and barked with delight.

Then Cynthia looked up and caught sight of the young man. She did not seem to be greatly astonished, but nodded to him and made a place for him on the tree. Perhaps she had expected him, or at least imagined that he might come that way. The reason for her being in that spot, a mile or two away from the house where she was stopping, is not clearly apparent, but, possibly the theory already mentioned is the correct one. Keene sat down beside her, and she at once proceeded to strengthen this theory by remarking:

"What a start you gave me. You are the last

person I expected to meet here."

"I hardly hoped to meet you here, though I came as near to the forbidden ground as I dared. Now you might tell me why you departed so suddenly, and without preparing me for it."

She looked at him with a mocking sidelong glance, and the merest suggestion of a dimple.

"I wished to avoid the pain of parting."

"You should have seen my despair when the maid told me this morning that you were gone."

"I suppose that Valeska did her best to

alleviate your woe."

"I didn't see Valeska. The maid told me that she was indisposed and lying down."

"It is very likely that she was lying down,

but most unlikely that she was indisposed. That was probably invented by Sarah. Sarah is a most inventive person. Valeska was simply taking her beauty sleep. I am the only one she stands in awe of, and, when I am away, I suspect her of staying in bed every day until noon."

"Suppose," said Keene, "that we now resume

"Suppose," said Keene, "that we now resume the conversation which we were having upon the day I found you talking with the guide."

"What conversation?"

"The talk which we had about the girl of the photograph, and how I went away on account of her, and came back on account of her, and how much I cared for her, and so on, and so on."

"But I thought that the conversation was ended."

"No, it was only just begun. You see I mean to marry the girl and, in that case, the conversation will go on forever."

"But if the girl objects?"

"Objects to the conversation?"

"No, to marrying you."

"I shall marry her all the same."

"Perhaps you mean to knock the girl down with a club and carry her off, as they did in the

good old prehistoric days."

"I shall not knock the girl down, but I may carry her off. I feel that way every time I see her. In fact, some such feeling is coming over me now."

"But what does the girl say about it?"

"Nothing definite as yet, but I hope for something decisive soon."

"Will you tell me when you find out?"

"You will know about it without my telling you."

"How can I possibly know about it?"

"Because you will be one of the two parties interested."

"Oh, I am the girl, am I? I never should have guessed it. All the same, it is very unfortunate."

"Why is it unfortunate, Cynthia?"

"Because I have made up my mind never to

marry."

"In one way, Cynthia, darling, that is good news. I was fearful of having a successful rival. If you are never going to marry, the successful rival is, of necessity, eliminated."

"Do you know what you have just called me? You have a large stock of assurance, sir.

'Cynthia, darling,' the idea!"

"I have some small amount of assurance, dearest, but I would like more, for instance, I would like to have you assure me, categorically, what I have only inferred from your assertion that you would never marry; namely: that there is no other man."

Cynthia looked at him demurely for a

moment.

"No, you foolish boy, there never has been another man; that is to say, there never has been a man."

"Then you will marry me?"

Cynthia laughed merrily.

"Haven't I just told you that I am never going to marry?"

"But if you should change your mind?"

"I will not change my mind. It is

impossible."

She became grave at this, and seemed lost in thought. That her thoughts were not of the pleasantest was shown by her downcast eyes and the sad expression of her mouth.

"No, but Cynthia sweetheart, let us suppose, merely suppose, that you did change your mind.

In that case would you marry me?"

"You would try the patience of an angel. I see that there is no stopping you. Well, if I ever did decide to marry, only such a contingency is impossible, it seems to me that you are a very unobjectionable person and that I might do worse. I must go now. I have stayed here too long already. I have been laughing and talking all kinds of nonsense with you, and you may suppose that I am outrageously gay and lighthearted, but I am not. The fact is that I feel horribly blue. You know I told you the other day that I had received bad news."

"But what is it, Cynthia? Tell me, and let me stand between you and this misfortune,

whatever it is."

"No, I cannot tell you. The very nature of it keeps me from telling you. Ah, well! perhaps it will work out right in the end. Now I really must be going."

"But when am I to see you again, Cynthia sweetheart? Can you not meet me here to-morrow?"

"Oh, I could not think of such a thing. It

would not do."

"Can I not go with you as far as the glen?"

"No, I absolutely forbid you. You must not stir one step from the spot where you are standing. This is such a delightful place that I hate to leave it. I very often come here at about this

hour. Well, good-bye."

She held out her hand to him and, as he took it in his, and felt its firm and dainty coolness, and as he gazed into her lovely face and felt the magic of her eyes, he was seized with a momentary madness, and drew her toward him as if to kiss her. She snatched her hand away from him, however, and ran swiftly into the forest, with her dog at her heels. When she was almost out of sight, she turned and blew him a kiss and then vanished from sight.

Keene had gone forward a few paces into the forest, to keep the girl in sight as long as possible. He could not sufficiently admire her graceful, swaying figure, or the perfect ease with which she walked. The goddess Diana, for whom she was named, could never have stepped as prettily. "Vera incessu patuit Dea,"

thought he.

He now turned to retrace his steps, and saw the old guide, Nate Sawyer, sitting upon the very log upon which Cynthia and he had rested. He was startled, and not without reason, at this sudden apparition.

"Hullo, Nate," he exclaimed. "Where in thunder did you come from, and what are you

doing here?"

"Oh, I come from nowhere in partikler and I was wanderin' around, headed for the same place. I found yew and the young lady conversin' and thinkin' it might be bad manners to break in on ye, I hung around till she was gone.

Fact is, I wanted to hev a talk with ye."

"All right, Nate. I have something to say to you also. When I left you a week or so ago, you said that you had important business at home. You were in such a hurry that you refused to guide me down through the gorge. In the last few days I have seen you three times in this locality. You must have made awfully quick time to get home and return here in four days. It was just four days after you left me that I saw you coming down Otter Creek in a canoe."

"Naw, it couldn't 'a' been me. Yew must

a been mistaken."

"Well, the man I saw was as like you as one pea is like another. Come now, Nate, own up; otherwise I will set you down as an unprincipled prevaricator."

"Waal, I might as well own up to it first as last, seein' as yew've got me dead to rights. But what if ye did see me in that there canoe?

What's there uncommon in that?"

"You told me that coming down the creek in a boat was impossible, and that several men

had lost their lives trying it."

"Yaas, and I told yew the truth. Comin' down Otter Creek in a boat is a awful risky thing. No one has ever done it and lived to tell on it, exceptin' myself. There's only one man can do it and I'm that man. To tell the truth," here he dropped his voice and looked around him as if to see if he were overheard. "I wuz in a leetle bit of a hurry that day, and sometimes I come that way; specially when I'm put to it fer time. It takes me down from the last lake to the gorge, a matter of twelve miles, in about an hour, instead of a four hour march through the woods."

"Yaas," added the old man, in his nasal, drawling voice, after an interval of a minute, which he spent in filling and lighting his corn cob pipe. "It's a risky thing to dew, but not half as risky as somethin' that ye tried to dew yerself several days ago. I told ye to take the left hand side of the gorge, on your way to Glendale and, instead of that, yew went to work

and started down the right-hand side."

"What side of the gorge are we on now?" asked Arthur.

"On the right-hand side of course. Any fool'd know that."

"It may be the right-hand side as you go up, but it would certainly be the left-hand side coming down, and that is why I tried to come down upon this side."

"No sir! not by a long shot. Ef it's the righthand side, it's the right-hand side and nothin' can change it. How could it be one side one day and another side another day? That's what I'd like to know."

"Well, Nate, we won't argue about the matter. If you say that this side of the gorge is the right-hand side, the right-hand side it is. I want to tell you something. When I was on my way down, I met and had a talk with the gray ghost you were telling me of."

"Yaas, I see you did," answered the old man,

dryly.

"What's more, instead of it's bringing me bad luck, I have had nothing but good luck ever since."

"There's time yet," said Nate, in a somber tone. "None of us knows what's goin to happen

to us from one day to the other."

"Furthermore," continued Keene, "that same night, I saw the ghost lights, the same lights which you saw just before you tumbled through the roof of your shack upon the sleeping form of Shorty McCabe. While I was watching the light, I also saw an answering light in the woods upon the other side of the gorge. What do you know about that?"

The old guide looked suddenly up at Keene,

with a somewhat startled expression.

"What should I know about it?" said he.

"Nevertheless, I think that you could tell me something about it, if you wished to." Nate ruminated for a moment before he spoke. When he did speak, it was of something which seemed quite irrelevant.

"Do ye happen to know of a man who hangs out at Wilkinson's tavern in the village, named

Featherstone?"

"Yes, I know about him and have seen him. I have heard nothing to his credit and his appearance certainly coincides with his reputation."

"Waal, that man Featherstone is the meanest

cur in these five counties."

"I believe you, and I have heard that he annoys Miss Cynthia, the lady I was just talking with. Has he been doing anything of the kind lately?"

"Speakin' of mean men minds me of old Dan Ferguson. D'I ever tell ye of old Ferguson and

his wife?"

"No, you never did, but let that go until some other day. I want to hear about Featherstone."

"All in good time. We got lots of time, and

I jest got to tell ye that story."

Keene coming to the conclusion that the sooner Nate had the story off his mind, the sooner his anxiety about Featherstone would be allayed, resigned himself to the inevitable and the old guide began his yarn.

"Waal, old Dan Ferguson and Miss Ferguson, his wife, lived in a poor kind of a shack, down near Pisceo Lake, about three mile from Morehouseville. Dan had two wooden legs,

those old-fashioned peg legs, with straps to em; he hevin' had his legs froze one winter, years before, and ampetated, count of gettin' boozed and goin' to sleep in the snow. Cordin' to old Dan, though, he lost them legs of his'n fightin' pirates and sech like down on the Spanish Main, wherever that is. When he got three or four drinks into him, down at the tavern at Morehouseville, he used to swear horrible and go on somethin' amazin' about the fightin' he hed been into, where the decks of the ships was piled waist high with corpses, and the scuppers wuz runnin' with blood. He told them stories so often, he ended up by believin' em himself, and he wuz always the main guy too, leadin' his band of followers and makin' most of that bloodshed with his own good sword. The old residents of the place, howsomever, would tell ye that Dan Ferguson had never been so far away from Morehouseville, that he couldn't hev walked hum by sundown.

"Now, Miss Ferguson, old Dan's wife wuz a fust-rate, pious old lady, or would hev been ef her husband had been anyways decent. She took in washin' and did some sewin' for the few neighbors thereabouts, and did her best to keep the old man in clothes and vittles and, most of all, to keep him sober. It wa'nt much use though, for, now and then, he'd get hold of the money she'd earned, and peg along down to the tavern, where he'd stop till he'd spent the last cent in likker, and even pawned the shirt offen his back.

This natchully caused no end of wranglin' tween him and his wife. Miss Ferguson had a sharp tongue, and people goin' by their cabin could hear em at it all hours of the day and night."

"Waal, I was down at the tavern at More-houseville, one mornin', sittin' in the bar room, along with half a dozen guides; when the door opened and Dan Ferguson kem peggin' into the room. He kem up to us, grinnin' all over and was as chipper as ye please, and pulled a set of teeth outen his pocket, the same what I hed given her, and he says, says he:

"I got up this mornin' before the old woman was awake, and stole them out from under her

piller. Now, damn her, let her bite."

"Waal, I was that riled, that I wanted to knock the old cuss down, and I would hev, ef it wan't fer his wooden legs, but I got up and I

says, says I:

"That's a mighty low down thing what you done. No gentleman would do that to a lady. The last time I saw Miss Ferguson, she says to me: 'My husband is the meanest man that God

ever let live;' and now I believe her."

"Now, about three months arter that, it bein' in the winter time, and a awful hard winter, I was up to Blue Mountain Lake, stayin' the night with old Sam Partridge and his wife; she bein' a sister of Miss Ferguson. Jest before supper time, we heard the ringin' of sleigh bells, and a pair of bobs drives up to the door, and out gets Miss Ferguson. She hed come to stay

fer a week, and hed fetched her trunk with her. "But what about Dan'l?" asked Miss Partridge, after she hed kissed her sister, and made her warm and comfortable before the fire. "Won't he be carryin' on somethin' dreadful, while you're away?"

"Not so's you'd notice it, Mirandy. I sawed a lot of cord wood, and left enough vittles in the house fer a week, so's he'll be as snug as a

bug in a rug."

"Laws sakes! I should think you'd be worritin' about him all the same. Supposin' he should go and git tanked up and go to sleep in the snow on his way home, and git froze to death."

"I ain't worritin' enny about him. He's sittin' at this blessed moment, before a good cord wood fire, smokin' a pipe peaceable and readin' 'Saints Rest' and 'Steps Heavenward."

"But what's to hinder him, ef he takes it into his head to go to Morehouseville and fill up with

likker."

"I'll show you what's to hinder him," says

Miss Ferguson.

Then she takes us over to her trunk and opens it, and there, in among her poor, faded, frazzled calicoes and what not, was both of old

Dan Ferguson's wooden legs."

"But, I was tellin' ye about this man Featherstone. Sometimes he calls himself Featherstonehaugh. Haw, haw! And he says as how he wuz descended from some of those English Lords ye hear tell of. If so, he must hev descended quite a ways. He dresses like a gentleman, and a little way off, he looks like one, but that's as near as he comes to it. more'n six months now, he has been favorin' this young lady with his attentions; in fact, he has fair pestered the girl to death. More than once I've hed to walk with her all the way from the glen to the village, she was that downright afraid of him. About ten days ago, I was prospectin' around in the woods, near the glen, and I saw her comin' from the direction of the village. She didn't see me, but took the ladder and went down out of sight behind the falls. Then, right on her heels, comes this man Featherstone. He cranes his neck over the cliff and pries about this way and that, and I saw immediate that he had followed her through the woods, and hed discovered her secret. That was what I wuz tellin' her the day yew saw us talkin'. That is what the girl is worritin' about, and, ef ye knew what it meant to her. as I dew, yew wouldn't wonder at worritin'."

"What's the matter with throwing him over the cliff?" asked Keene.

"Nothin' at all, and I hope ye dew it. Now, what ye want to dew is this: Ef ye see this man Featherstone prospectin' through the woods up in this direction, yew want to foller him. Yew want to foller him as the catamount follered Hezekiah Jones."

"And in what particular manner did the

catamount follow Mr. Jones?"

"What, didn't I ever tell ye that story? I thought as how I told ye the story about Jones and the catamount."

"Not that I remember, Nate, though you have told me a hundred stories, first and last. Stories seem to roll off your tongue like water from a duck's back. You can beat Scheherezade at telling stories."

"I don't know about that, seein' as I never knew the gent. I'd like to meet up with him though and swap a few with him. Waal, ef ye want to hear how the catamount follered Jones,

just listen and I'll tell ye."

"Hadn't we better put it off, Nate, until some more favorable time? It's getting late and I

should be on my way back to the hotel."

"Naw," it won't take but a few minutes, and ef ye don't listen now, I may disremember it by the time I see ye agin. Waal, it wuz jest this way: Hezekiah Jones lived at a small settlement up at the head of Crooked Lake. He wuz a man about fifty, a poor, no account, lazy, good-for-nothin' sort of a creetur, with a fondness fer settin' in the sun and fer consumin' as much likker as he could get a hold of. He hed a scoldin', ailin' old wife, and he certainly wuz good to her in a way. He didn't dew much in the way of pervidin' fer the house, but, if there wuz anythin' she wanted, he'd go ten mile afoot arter it. Along about two year ago this

summer, she wuz sufferin' from a bad attack of rheumatiz, and she allowed she'd like to make some sort of yarb tea. Now there wa'nt no such yarbs as he wanted in that locality, but Hezekiah said as how he knew where to get some. So he took a boat and started down the lake bright and early in the mornin'. When he got half way down the lake, he landed and struck off through the woods, six or seven miles to a clearin', what he knew of. When he found what yarbs he wanted, and, when he had plucked em, he starts back through the woods fer the lake. It wuz now along toward noon, he wuz mighty tired and the sun wuz hot, so he concluded fer to lay down under a tree and take a short nap. He hedn't slep very long, when he wuz woke up with somethin' a smellin' and a nosin' of him. He opens his eyes and thar wuz a catamount, as big as the biggest kind of a dawg, a snoopin' round him, as ef he wuz kind a makin' up his mind where he'd put his teeth in first. Waal, Hezekiah wuz scairt that stiff thet he couldn't move, his eyes wuz jest poppin' outen his head, and the sweat stood out on him all over. Presently he lets out a howl thet could a been heard a mile off, and rolls over two or three times outen the criter's reach, and jumps to his feet, and runs off through the woods as ef the very old devil was arter him. Waal, sir, that catamount wuz sorter surprised at first and jest stood a lookin'. Then he started arter him with a sort of easy, swingin' lope and, it wa'nt no time at all before he ketched up with Hezekiah. He didn't jump at him or put his teeth into him, but jest follered him, and every time Hezekiah'd look back of him, there wuz that critter's nose about three inches from the seat of his pants. Say, mebbe he didn't run some. Arter he'd run a mile or two, he wuz all in and couldn't run no further. His tongue hung outen his mouth, his lungs went up and down like a bellows and his heart wuz beatin' like a sledge hammer. But still he kep a goin' and a goin' toward the lake; thinkin' that ef he could onct reach his boat, he could get away from the beast. And there wuz that painter a follerin' him like a dawg, with his nose jest an inch from Hezekiah's calves. Pretty soon he kem to a likely tree, and givin' a jump fer it, he swarmed up it like a sailor man. He wuz so scart that he had no sense left, or he'd a knowd that a catamount kin climb a tree better'n a squirrel. Waal, he got out on a limb which wuz about twelve feet from the ground. Then he turned around and saw the critter creepin' along the limb toward him with his tail swishin' from side to side. He got out on the end of the limb, so that the limb wuz bendin' beneath him, and the catamount kep a crawlin arter him, with his big yaller cat's eyes a-glowerin' at him, and the hot breath of the beast makin' him sick to his stummick. Then all on a sudden the limb broke and down he kem to the ground, with the painter eenamost on top of him. He never

knowed how he got to his feet and got away, but get away he did. Then it wuz the same thing all over again; he a-runnin' and a-runnin' and a-walkin' and a-walkin', with that thar beast's nose jest so far from the seat of his pants. Waal, arter what seemed to Jones a hundred years, he kem at last outen the woods to where his boat wuz. He made one good spurt, got to the boat, shoved it off and fell into it. He wuz lyin' 'atween the thwarts, when, of a sudden, he felt the boat jounce up and down, and, lookin' round, he saw that catamount a-settin' on the stern seat, a-lickin' his chops. Then he crawled up forward, took the paddle and paddled fer all he wuz wuth toward home. Pretty soon, howsomever, the animile begins to creep along the bottom of the boat to get at him, and he jabs him with the paddle, and hollers: "Wow! What yer doin'? Get back ther, ye nasty beast."

But the catamount didn't mind him, but kep a gettin' nearer and nearer. Then, of a sudden, he sort a made a pass fer Hezekiah; Hezekiah jumps to one side and the boat upset. When Jones kem up, he saw that painter a swimin' fer shore. He didn't want his society no more so he strikes out fer a pint on the other side of the lake, about a quarter mile off. He wuz most drowndid a-gettin' there, but he touched bottom arter a while and he dragged hisself up outen the water, and, when he looked arter the catamount, he wa'nt nowhere in sight. Arter layin' down and restin' all of a half hour, he sets out

and walks up the lake, all of four miles to the settlement. When he kem to his shanty, he found his wife wuz gone to stay over night with her sister, who lived three mile away, so he turns in and goes to bed with all his close on, bein' so dead tired and flabbergasted that he went to sleep as soon as he struck the mattress, and slep till the next mornin'. Waal, would ye believe it, when he woke up and looked round the room, the fust thing he see wuz that thar catamount a-sittin' on the floor at the foot of the bed and a-lookin' at him, with them big yaller eyes of his'n. They wuz two small winders in the room, and one of them wuz open, and, that wuz the way the critter got in. Waal, Jones wuz out of bed and outen the door and he'd slammed it to, quicker'n you could say scat. Then he went to the shed, got a board and a hammer and nails and nailed the board against the winder. "Now," sez he, "Ye pesky, gol durned, nasty varmint, I got ye." Then he went to the tavern, where there wuz always four or five fellers asettin' round waitin' fer some one to set up the drinks, and he hollers out to em as he kem in the door: "Boys' sez he, "they's a awful big catamount up to the house, in my bedroom."
"Oh, what ye givin' us? Go chase yerself,"

"Oh, what ye givin' us? Go chase yerself," sez a man named Bill Harkins, who wuz among

those present.

"Yer been drinkin' agin," sez a feller named Tony Meeker.

"Naw, I aint been drinkin'," sez Jones. Then

he goes on and tells em how he fell asleep in the woods and how that thar painter hed woke him up a-nosin' and a-snoopin' over him, and how he hed been a-follerin' of him ever sence.

"Yer got the jimjams," sez another gent

named Peter Small.

"He sure has," sez some one else.
"Say, you fellers," shouted Hezekiah, "here's two dollars, and I'll bet it agin a round of drinks fer the crowd that thar's a catamount in my bedroom."

When they see that he wuz willin' to risk two dollars, they made up their minds there might be somethin' in it, so they all follered Jones up to his house and looked in the window, and saw the varmint a-settin' there sure enough. Then two of em got long poles and stuck em through the two winders, and poked em into his hide. First one of em would jab him and then the other, as he ran backwards and forwards across the room, and the way that catamount yowled and screeched would a riz the hair on top of your head. When they had punched the daylights most outen the critter, Tony Meeker said he'd go to his house, which wuz about a quarter of a mile off and git his rifle and shoot the varmint. While he wuz gone arter the rifle, a stranger kem a-walken' pretty fast down the road, and he sez to the fellers: "Say, yew boys, has any one of youse seen a stray catamount loose around here?"

"Sure," they all hollered. "He's in this house."

The stranger took a look through the winder.

"That's him fer sartain," sez he. "But what ye been a doin' to him? He looks all beaten up,

and there's blood all over his head."

"We been a-jabbin' the hell outen him with those poles," sez Bill Harkins, "and Tony Meeker's gone to get his rifle, so's he kin finish the varmint."

"Say, that stranger wuz the maddest man yew ever did see. "Yew good fer nothin' low down loafers," sez he. "That's my tame catamount. He wouldn't hurt a rabbit, and here yew been a poundin' the stuffin' outen the poor little cuss. I got that painter when he wuz a month old, and brought him up on bread and milk and canned corn. I filed his teeth and cut his claws regular, and he's so tame that my two kids kin maul him all around the house. He's only nine months old now, and he's jest like a great pup dawg. Say, how'd yew come up with him? How'd he come in there? Then Jones he up and tells his story all over agin. When he'd got through with it, the man sez to him, sez he, "What'd ye dew to him to make him foller ye like that?" "I aint done nothin' to him," sez Jones. "Yes ye hev done somethin' to him, or he wouldn't a follered ye. Yew been enticin' him in some way." "Naw, I aint been enticin' him." "What yew got in your pockets?" sez the stranger. "Both your coat pockets is stuffed full of some kind of leaves." "That?" sez

Hezekiah. "That's catnip. My old woman's got the rheumatiz awful bad, and I got this catnip to make some catnip tea. "And don't ye know, ye derned fool," said the stranger, "that a catamount will go forty mile arter catnip?" Waal, he opened the door and the catamount kem out and follered him away through the woods like a dawg; and always arter that the boys called Hezekiah "Catamount Jones." Waal, now ye know how the catamount follered Hezekiah Jones, and that's the way I want ye to foller this here Featherstone, ef ye see him prospectin' around this away. I'd dew it myself, only I got to get away toward hum. Ef anythin' happens to that gal, I'd feel mighty sorry, and I want yew to let me know of it. She'll know where to find me. Now I must be off."

Keene and the guide grasped each other by the hand. The former assured the latter that he would follow out his instructions and they separated, Nate plunging into the forest, and Keene setting out on his way to the hotel. All the way there he pondered deeply upon the mystery which seemed to surround the girl, and at the same time he wondered at the guide's interest in her, and at the miraculous manner in which the old man contrived to turn up at

all kinds of times and places.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE RIDDLE IS SOLVED

Keene returned to the Inn at about half past four in the afternoon, and, going into the office of the hostelry, found the Englishman, Featherstone, sitting there. It at once occurred to him that it would be good policy to make a show of friendship to the enemy, as, in that way, he would be the more likely to learn of his designs. He therefore nodded to him in an amiable manner, and, taking a chair by his side, offered him a cigar, and engaged him in conversation upon the news of the day, and upon other topics of a general character.

Featherstone seemed pleased with the acquaintance, and, in a few minutes, proposed a game of billiards. Arthur, nothing loth, went with him into a room back of the bar, where he found a billiard table so old and dilapidated that it might have come over in the Mayflower. They played two games, and Featherstone won them both, which was not astonishing, as he invariably marked up ten or twelve points upon the string, whenever he made a run of six or Keene watched him with disguised

amusement.

"What a cheap, contemptible cad!" thought he.

During the games, the Englishman drank three or four glasses of Scotch whiskey. Twice he asked Arthur to join him, and seemed to be vexed at his refusal to do so.

After they had finished playing and were passing through the bar room toward the office, he took Keene's arm and stopped him.

"You must have one drink with me, anyway, old chap, to show there's no hard feelings about the games. You can't refuse a gentleman's invitation like that, you know. Besides, I wish to give a toast."

Keene knew instinctively that a crisis was coming, though he could not have told what it was to be. He never drank whiskey, but he reached for the bottle and poured his glass full

to the brim with spirits.

"You aren't going to drink that amount of liquor neat, are you?" asked Featherstone, astonished. "My Aunt! You must have the stomach of a blooming ostrich. Now, for the toast." Raising his glass aloft, "Here's to the health of the prettiest girl in the country; Cynthia Marwood."

Arthur raised his glass, as if to drink, and then, suddenly, threw the contents, with ex-

quisite aim, into the Englishman's eyes.

Featherstone spluttered and gagged, dropping his own glass to the floor; then, dashing the stuff out of his eyes, he gave one frightful oath and leaped for Keene's throat. Old man Wilkinson, however, at the first sign of trouble,

had slipped around from behind the bar, and seizing Featherstone's arms, pinioned them behind him.

"None of that," said the old man, "that kind

of thing doesn't go in here."

"I'll kill you for this," shouted the enraged Briton, as he struggled vainly in Wilkinson's

grasp.

Arthur stood calmly and smiled at him. Presently, seeing that further action would be suspended for an indefinite time, he sauntered leisurely through the office to the stairway and ascended to his room. He now sat down by the window, where he could watch the village street, and chuckled as he recalled Featherstone's appearance, with the liquor trickling down his face and into his moustache and over his collar and shirt.

"We are now at dagger points," thought he. "Nothing better could have happened. I have commenced, as I should, by insulting him, and the strangest thing about it is that it makes me feel now as if I could murder him in cold blood."

At half past five, Featherstone issued from the Inn, accompanied by a tall, strongly built man, who was dressed coarsely and like a woodsman. The two had been drinking quite deeply, to judge from their flushed faces and the mathematical precision with which they walked. Arthur waited until he thought a sufficient interval had elapsed, and then went down into the village street and followed them. As he passed through the office, he asked Wilkinson who it was that had gone out with the Englishman and was told that the man's name was Salter.

The two men ahead of Keene took the direction of the mill. When they reached it they did not enter, but passed around it. They were engaged in low, earnest talk, and sauntered along as if they had no particular business upon their minds. The path soon brought them within cover of the woods above the mill, and at once their whole demeanor changed. Now it seemed as if they were occupied with some settled and well-planned purpose. They seemed to know just where they were going, and their slow aimless saunter, with which they had set out from the tavern, was changed to a rapid, business-like walk.

They kept along the creek for perhaps a mile after leaving the mill; then they turned toward the south along the edge of the marsh filled with cat-tails, and, after proceeding in this direction for about a mile, they turned about to the east and struck out through the very heart of the dense pine forest.

Now and then Featherstone, who acted as the guide on this occasion, would stop and look around him, as if seeking some indication by which he might verify some route which he had before taken; then they would go on again, sometimes turning to the south, and as often veering around to the east, always with the same rapid

walk and appearance of a settled and well-laid

plan.

Towards half past six o'clock they had got five or six miles away from Glendale. At this point they paused again, and, after a somewhat longer examination of the trees and other objects in the vicinity, they took, for the first time, a northerly direction. Half an hour more brought them to a small stream, deep and clear as crystal, which whirled along beneath the overarching dark-green branches, upon a bed which seemed as if cut out of the solid rock for its special accommodation.

"I knew I should find it all right," exclaimed Featherstone, with a laugh of triumph. "Ten minutes more and we will get to the bally fall."

In a few minutes more, in fact, the sound of a fall of water was heard in the distance. The two men hastened, and shortly found themselves on the edge of a small gulley or cañon, in close proximity to the cascade which they had heard while approaching through the forest.

They were upon the very spot where Keene had stood with Roberts after they had come up out of the wonderful glen, where the former had passed such a memorable night.

The Englishman threaded his way through

the underbrush towards the cascade.

"The ladder should be hereabouts," said he, "unless the fools have suspected something and taken it down." "I don't see it," exclaimed his companion. "Curse them! they've been too smart for us."

"Not this time, Salter; for here it is," shouted Featherstone, exultingly. "That thousand dollars reward looks pretty good. What?"

He had no sooner found it than he commenced to descend. When he reached the platform cut into the rock, behind the cascade, he paused and waited for his companion to join him. This Salter did with some trouble, as he found greater difficulty in the descent than his lighter and more agile partner.

The two men, with the Englishman in the lead, then started to come out upon the path or ledge which skirted the glen, when suddenly Featherstone drew back, pulling Salter with

him, under cover of the falling water.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Salter.

"The girl! didn't you see her? She stands out on that point of cliff which juts over the creek, two hundred feet down the glen." Salter craned his neck out of their hiding-place.

"Yes, there she is, sure enough, and she's an elegant picture to boot. What will you do

now?"

"I propose to get between her and the house, which lies a quarter of a mile the other side of her around the bend. You wait here and cut her off if she tries to get away into the woods, and I'll sneak along under cover of the rocks and shrubs until I get the other side of her."

He immediately proceeded to put his plan

into execution. Cynthia, for it was she, was standing in a pensive attitude, looking down into the water. The ledge at the point where she stood was some forty feet wide, and covered with several great boulders and a number of dwarfed hemlocks, so that it seemed an easy matter for him to elude her attention and pass behind her. Such, in fact, it proved, for in a few minutes, by dint of dodging from one cover to another, Featherstone had passed the spot where she stood and suddenly appeared to her astonished gaze, thirty or forty feet farther down the gulch.

When she saw him arise, as it were, out of the rocks, she uttered a cry of alarm and turned to go up the glen. Then she saw his companion, and knew that retreat was cut off in both directions. What did she do then but return quickly to her first position on the point of the

cliff which overhung the abyss.

Featherstone advanced toward her, touching his hat as he did so with a mocking air of politeness.

"What do you want?" she asked, in as steady

a voice as possible.

"That remains to be seen, pretty sweetheart. I heard you were living here in the woods, and thought I'd come up and see what kind of a little dove cot you had."

"This is private property. How dare you come here without permission? I shall call the

men unless you go at once."

She drew herself up as high and struck as imposing an attitude as her five feet four permitted.

"They won't hear you; and, besides, there's nothing to worry about. I was simply making a gentlemanly call. They tell strange stories about your people here. I think it's all a lot of Tommy rot, but I thought I'd come up and see what there was of it. Not that I'd ever say anything about what I saw, my little Cynthia."

The girl turned a frightened, anxious look down the glen. She knew she would not be heard at the cottage should she scream, and, besides, there were reasons why she did not wish to bring aid from that direction. He advanced still nearer, and she retreated to the very verge of the cliff, which at this point was fifty or sixty feet above the bed of the stream.

"Come, darling!" said he, with an insulting leer on his face. "We'll go down together and make a call at the cottage, and see if the master of the house is as elegant a gentleman as he is reported to be. I would have called there ten days ago if I had thought you were there."

The girl shrank away from him in speechless terror, a terror which seemed to be caused by something more than her apprehensions for

herself.

"What! you won't come, Cynthia dear? How it pains me to see you so unfriendly! Let's have a kiss and make it up; what?" Saying this, he advanced toward her.

"If you come one step nearer," she cried, "I'll jump off the cliff. I'd rather die than have

such a beast as you touch me."

She stood on the very edge of the chasm, erect and defiant. Her small head was thrown back, her luxuriant, wavy hair trembled in the breeze, and in her eloquent eyes was a look of determination which assured him that she would carry out her threat.

He paused and temporized a little.

"I was only joking. I wouldn't care to kiss an unwilling maid. As for the call, I suppose we'll have to put it off to some other time. My friend there seems to be getting impatient. See,

he is coming toward us.'

His companion had, in fact, left his position and advanced down the glen until he was quite near them. The unsuspecting girl looked up in the direction pointed out by the Englishman. It was the occasion he was looking for. He sprang forward quick as a flash and, grasping her by the wrist, pulled her away from the edge of the cliff. He held her easily while she struggled and tried to tear his hand from her arm. Salter came within ten feet, and stood leaning upon a boulder, watching the performance with an appreciative and satyr-like grin.

Then all at once, as unexpectedly as lightning out of a clear sky, there leaped the form of a man out of the copse of dwarf hemlocks behind Featherstone, and the latter felt himself grasped by the collar with a tremendous jerk which

threw him away from the girl and sent him

spinning around like a teetotum.

"Oh, Arthur!" cried Cynthia, joyously, "I never was more glad in my life to see anyone. I'm afraid, though, you haven't hurt him much.

What a pity!"

Keene, for it was that young man who had created such an unlooked-for diversion, stood for a moment contemplating Featherstone, who seemed to have some difficulty in recovering his equilibrium, owing partly to the spinning process and partly to the influence of John Barleycorn. Then he looked at the girl with a comical expression.

"You see, Cynthia, I have broken that famous

promise."

"Don't speak of that now," said the girl. "A man should know when to keep a promise and when to break it." Then, suddenly, her expression changed to one of alarm, and she cried out:

"Arthur,—the other one!—behind you!" She was too late. Salter, whom he had not observed, had stolen stealthily behind him, and ere he could turn he felt himself imprisoned in the iron grasp of the arms of the sinewy backwoodsman.

The Englishman, at this, made a rush for the girl, who had turned to fly, and caught her around the waist. The sight nerved Keene to almost superhuman endeavor, so that he succeeded in twisting himself around and catching hold of his captor, and the two went staggering about the rocky platform, among the boulders and shrubs, tripping and rolling over each other and getting up again, until at last they fell heavily with Keene underneath. Salter was the larger and stronger of the two, but the young man was the more agile and his muscles were in better training and more practised. He succeeded in raising himself upon his left elbow and dealt two terrible, stinging blows with his right fist upon Salter's jaw and eye. Maddened by the pain, the great brute reached for a knife which he carried in his coat-pocket. The blade opened with a spring as he raised it. Keene struck him again, and the blade descended in the grass. At that moment, Cynthia, who had been struggling to tear herself from the grasp of Featherstone, and who had caught sight of the man with the uplifted knife bending over the prostrate form of Keene, screamed and slipped, fainting, through Featherstone's arms to the ground. Salter, with the impetus of the blow which he had dealt, lost his equilibrium. It was Keene's advantage, and in a second the burly woodsman was underneath and his antagonist, clutching him by his tangled hair and by his throat, was hammering the rock with his head.

The Englishman, who supposed that his friend would do for Keene without trouble, had not observed the change which matters had taken. After bending over the girl for a moment, he had risen and was contemplating her with an air of fatuous triumph, when, with-

out warning, he received such a terrible, well-aimed blow upon the side of his head from Keene's fist, that he plunged headlong twenty feet along the rocky platform, and lay doubled up in an inert and shapeless mass, in a hollow of

the rock half filled with muddy water.

Cynthia had fallen in such a position that her head lay upon her arm, with her face looking up. Her eyes were closed, her long black lashes swept her cheek and made it seem deathly white, by comparison. Arthur brought some water from the little rivulet which trickled across the ledge and bathed her forehead, but she still showed no signs of life. Then the thought of the outrage wrought upon the woman he loved overcame him, and he so far forgot himself that he went over and kicked the prostrate form of Featherstone, obtaining from that individual several groans or grunts in way of response.

It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening and the dusk was beginning to draw down. There was only one thing to do. He must carry Cynthia to the cottage. He took up the limp and unconscious girl tenderly and set out on his journey down the glen. As he started, he noticed that Salter was now sitting up and was rubbing his head and looking around in a stupid and

dazed manner.

In the position in which he held the girl, her head, with its abundance of soft and lustrous hair, nestled on his shoulder, her round arm was flung loosely about his neck, her cheek almost pressed his own, and her warm and balmy breath, which now began to come spasmodically and fitfully, fanned his cheek. He was filled with concern about her condition, but at the same time he could not help taking pleasure in contemplating so closely the perfect charms of

his innocent and lovely burden.

He was obliged, necessarily, to proceed slowly and with great circumspection, and it was several minutes before he made the two or three turns in the path and arrived at that point where the house was visible through the trees. There was a light shining from one of the windows, and as he drew near he observed a person standing upon the steps and apparently peering into the gathering gloom.

When he had come within a short distance of the cottage, Cynthia began to show signs of returning consciousness. Her bosom rose and fell, her breath came faster and she made efforts

to disengage herself from Keene's arms.

At this, he set her feet gently upon the ground, and, finding that she could walk, put his arm around her waist, and so supported her. It may be that she was somewhat tardy in showing signs of returning consciousness, and that she permitted herself to be carried a great deal longer than was absolutely necessary. It must be remembered, however, that she was exceedingly upset and very tired, and probably it was also true that she felt quite comfy where she was. The person standing upon the steps now

came forward to meet them, and was shown to be an old, white-bearded man. When they came within a few paces of him, the girl suddenly left her protector and, stepping ahead, threw her arms around the old man's neck and hung upon him.

"Father!" was all she said.

## CHAPTER XIV

## AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Keene stood riveted to the spot with openeyed astonishment. In a second a hundred thoughts traversed his brain, a hundred hitherto perplexing incidents came to his mind, and almost the whole mystery of the last week became clear to him.

"What is it, child? Speak! Are you hurt? or ill? What has happened? And this young man, the same if I mistake not who was our guest not long since, how comes he here?"

The old man stood erect with his arm around Cynthia's waist, his keen dark eyes were fixed searchingly but kindly upon Arthur, and the tones of the voice were the same as those which the young man had heard upon that well-re-

membered night.

"He is here, father, by right of conquest and of courage. In fact, if he were not here, I would not be here. Two men set upon me, right by Lookout Rock, near the cascade. One of them was Featherstone, and they had been drinking." She flashed a caressing look at Keene. "It would warm your heart to see what Arthur—I mean Mr. Keene—did to them."

The question will be asked, How did Cynthia know so well what Arthur had done to them, when, at the crucial moment, she was lying upon the rocks, apparently oblivious of

all earthly events?

"Well, well child," said the old gentleman, "compose yourself, and you may tell me all about it later. Let us go in now, that Lisbeth may look after you. Sir," said he, turning to Keene, "you are welcome to this poor home of mine. Will

you enter with us?"

The father and daughter then ascended the steps and entered the cottage. Arthur followed them gladly, as may be imagined. The old man motioned him to enter the library, the same room where he had been received before, and as he did so, Cynthia and her father passed into that part of the house on the opposite side of the corridor.

A light was burning in a hanging lamp, the same which he had seen on approaching the cottage, and by its aid he now saw, in their accustomed places, all the objects which he had noticed upon his first visit. The books, the paintings, the weapons upon the wall, the great easy-chairs, and even the miniature of Cynthia. A fan lay upon one of the chairs, and upon an oaken table in one corner was a girl's hat, one which he had seen many times before upon the head of its fair owner. These two trivial objects recalled a dozen pleasing scenes to his mind and made the room seem more familiar and dear to him.

He sank down upon a great, well-worn,

leather-covered couch, and, while awaiting the return of his hosts, meditated deeply upon the occurrences of the day and upon the extraordinary developments which he had just witnessed. Everything was clear to him now. The father, guilty of a crime twenty-five years ago, living in this secluded spot while the world believed him dead; the child, loving him not-withstanding all, and faithfully clinging to him in his adversity, fearful at all times lest his retreat should be discovered, visiting him fre-

quently, and making his fortunes hers.

This discovery easily accounted for all the seeming eccentricities and contradictions in Cynthia's character and in her treatment of and manner towards him; and the more he thought about the matter, the more sensible he became of her peculiarly painful and awkward position. He remembered the sadness of her manner during the last few days when he was in her society. He was filled with compassion for the sweet and noble girl. He foresaw that the future would have trials and sorrows for her many times heavier and more bitter than any she had experienced, and, with the loyalty and staunchness of a true and gallant youth, his affection for her and his determination to stand between her and misfortune increased in proas he deemed her wretched and portion unfortunate.

He was left alone for a long time, perhaps half an hour, and he improved the time by stepping into the bed chamber, removing the stains from his clothing, and otherwise rehabilitating himself. At length the door opened, and Cynthia's father stepped into the library. By the light of the lamp he now had the first opportunity of carefully observing this mysterious personage. He arose to meet him, and was singularly impressed by his venerable countenance, his imposing figure, and his gentle and unassuming manner.

His beard and his hair were full and snowy white, his features clear-cut and noble, and in the expression of his mouth and of his keen black eyes, and even in the wrinkles of his face, there was a look of kindness, of decision, and

of rectitude.

"Mr. Keene," he began, "you will pardon me, I know, for keeping you waiting so long, when I tell you that the time has been occupied in listening to my daughter's account of the wretched event in which you so fortunately took part. Let me say now, briefly, that for what you have done you have a father's warmest and most enduring gratitude. Supper is now served, and it will please Cynthia and myself to have your company at our small table. We will say nothing about this matter during the meal, as the poor girl has not fully recovered from the shock; but afterwards, when we are alone, there are many things which I wish to say to you, both about this and other matters."

He had taken the young man's hand while

speaking these words. His own trembled somewhat with age or agitation, or both. Arthur returned his grasp cordially, and assured him that he was only too glad to be at his service, and they passed together through the corridor

into the supper-room.

It had the very same appearance as when he was last there. The quaint mahogany sideboard, black with age, the wonderfully carved chairs, the dim, vague portraits, the snowy linen, the glistening glass and silver, and the great curious lamp which threw its soft radiance upon the cloth and left the rest of the room in a mysterious shadow; how well he remembered them all!

The very same appearance, with one glad exception. In the previously vacant place, at the opposite end of the table, now sat the dear and charming being whose presence he had

longed for so vainly on his first visit.

She was very pale, and her plain and simple black robe was in marked contrast with the marvelous whiteness of her neck and face. She gave Keene a mischievous smile as he entered, and then, with cast-down eyes, resumed the duties which her part, as mistress of the table, imposed upon her.

Christopher Marwood, for this of course was the appellation of the old gentleman, occupied the place opposite her, and the young man was gratified with a seat between them, which brought him in close proximity to Cynthia. Noiseless and swift and skillful, the staid Lisbeth went about her business, treating the young man as though he were a daily and constant guest, and, save for the few words which were absolutely necessary, the first half of the meal was eaten in silence.

Arthur finally ventured a few trivial remarks on unimportant subjects, and this led to a conversation between himself and the father of Cynthia, which, gradually, led up to an animated and pleasant discussion upon absorbing and interesting topics, such as travel and literature and art.

Christopher Marwood, as Keene quickly perceived, was a man of wonderful intelligence and of extraordinary experiences. His wealth of information was prodigious, and his judgment upon the subjects of books and paintings and history was unbiassed and clear and deeply meditated. His words flowed forth in that low, musical, kindly voice which Arthur had heard, with such feeling on the memorable night of his first visit.

The sincerity and seriousness of his discourse made it plain that his knowledge came from a life-long and loving devotion to these pursuits; and his amiable and fatherly manner showed that he was actuated solely by the wish to please and to instruct. What wonder was it that his hearer, fascinated and enthralled by the old man's conversation, and now and then lifted to the seventh heaven by a sly and approving smile

from Cynthia, was rendered so oblivious of the present that time slipped away unnoticed, and

he almost forgot to satisfy his appetite.

To his great regret and sorrow, the meal came at last to an end. Mr. Marwood arose and gave him a look which meant that the moment for the preconcerted interview had arrived. As he prepared to accompany his stately and venerable host, he turned and was rewarded by an almost affectionate "good night" from the little huntress, accompanied by one of those whimsical smiles, so rare now, which brought the dimple to her cheek.

He passed with Mr. Marwood into the library. His host, after turning down the wick of the lamp a little, so as to give a more subdued and milder light, motioned him to the couch which he had once before taken that evening, and, seating himself opposite, for a while with his chin supported on his hand and his eyes cast upon the floor, seemed sunk in the

most serious and painful thoughts.

As Arthur observed him, he realized to the full the unfortunate and helpless situation in which he was placed. He thought of the terrible crime of which he was accused, and pictured to himself all the penitence, the remorse, and the agony which it had occasioned him. He found it almost impossible to believe that one so gifted, so gentle, and so amiable could have taken the life of his fellow man, and he wondered that, with such an imputation hovering over him and

suffering as he now seemed to be from the remembrance of that tragic scene of twenty-five years ago, he could throw it all aside, as he had during the last hour, and appear, to the full, the kindly, animated, courtly, old-fashioned gentleman.

"Mr. Keene," he at length commenced, slowly and gravely, "in saying what I am about to say I am actuated by more reasons than one. In the first place, I know you to be an honest and loyal gentleman. My acquaintance with you and yours is greater than you have supposed. On your first visit to this house I knew who you were and the object of your journey to this part of the State; I knew your family by reputation, and also, in some measure, personally. Many years ago I was intimately acquainted with your good and estimable uncle, John Wainsborough."

Keene gave a start of surprise, but Christopher Marwood, without noticing it, continued:

"This is one of the reasons, and is perhaps the least important. The others will appear as I progress with what I am about to tell you.

"Without doubt you have heard of my history, or at least a part of it. You have heard that I have been accused of a great crime. The accusation is true, but there are certain other things which I would have you know, and I propose now to give you, in a few words, a narrative of this unfortunate event and of its consequences.

"It was almost thirty years ago that I came

here with my brother, Stephen Marwood, and bought the tract of land which he owns now. He had brought a wife with him from our former home, but I was a single man. I will pass over the first three or four years of our occupation of this tract, and come down to the time when the trouble arose which brought on

that fatal catastrophe.

"We had a neighbor named Beriah Crane, a small land-owner, whose property had an inconsiderable frontage on Otter Creek, upon which stream, as you perhaps know, was situated the first and largest mill which we erected. Our water-power, as we found soon after erecting the mill, was not sufficient for our increasing business, and it became necessary to construct a new and larger dam, a quarter of a mile above the first one and some distance above the point where this man's property fronted upon the stream. This was the occasion of a lawsuit with Crane, which continued for two or three years, and cost us a great deal of money, and which, I regret to say, totally used up the limited resources of our opponent. About the justness of his claims I will say nothing. There are two ways of looking at everything, and probably the poor fellow thought that he was in the right.

"I was very hot-headed in those days, very different from my brother Stephen, who was cooler, more reasonable, and probably more just. I was firmly convinced that we were in the right,

and would brook no opposition, no matter what the cost might be. We grow wiser and calmer with age, and I now see that what I then thought no more than just and reasonable may have been

tyranny and oppression.

"After the courts had given two or three decisions in our favor, we proposed a settlement with our antagonist. It was agreed that we should meet at the spot where his land touched the stream, and there talk the matter over. We met as agreed, but the meeting had a most melancholy ending. Crane's mind had been embittered by his successive defeats and the loss of what little property he had. My brother and I were in the same frame of mind, and the conference quickly changed into an angry dispute, for which, I am sorry to say, perhaps I was more to blame than the others. I gave the unfortunate man some hard words, and in reply he used some epithet, I forget what it was now, which raised all the evil that was in me. I was beside myself with passion and I struck him, and the poor man fell senseless at my feet."

Here Christopher Marwood paused, seemingly much overcome, and pressed his hand to his eyes as if to shut out the remembrance of

this scene.

"Immediately," he at length continued, "I was conscious of what I had done. I bent over the body of my victim and did all that lay in my power to reanimate him, but it was in vain. It was a terrible blow which I had dealt him in

my insensate rage, and the horrible conviction came upon me that I was a murderer. His breath had stopped and his heart had ceased to beat, and at last my brother and I were forced to relinquish our hopes and exertions and face the dread reality which was brought before us.

"My brother, whose affection for me crowded out all other thoughts, at once advised me to fly. 'Go home immediately,' said he, 'and make the necessary preparations. I will remain here, meanwhile, and use every means possible to

bring him back to life.'

"I was stupefied with horror and remorse, and took the advice which was offered me. While engaged in the preparations for my departure I still hoped against hope. When Stephen arrived at the house, I looked longingly and beseechingly in his eyes, but the grave look upon his face let me know that the worse had

come to pass.

"He informed me that, after laboring for an hour or more with the inanimate clay, he had buried the remains and had carefully concealed every evidence which would lead to the detection of the crime. The few moments which were left us were occupied in settling our affairs. I had no future before me, no ambition, and no use for money, over and above what I would need for my own living. We had at that time about thirty thousand dollars lying in the bank. It was agreed that I should take this sum, and in return give up to my brother my interest in

the land and in the business. This interest was worth several times the amount which I received, but I parted with it without regret, and I was glad to be able in this way to repay Stephen in part for the affection which he had

always had for me.

"I went away from Glendale that night, as I supposed never to return. I crossed the ocean, and left, thousands of miles behind me, the scene of that awful tragedy; but, go where I might, the remembrance of it, in all its details, was ever with me. After a while I sought forgetfulness in work. I engaged in mercantile pursuits, and became interested, with two others, in importing merchandise from South America. I prospered out of all reason; everything I touched seemed to turn into money.

"It was about this time that I met the true and beautiful woman who became my wife. That is her portrait yonder upon the wall. I

have another always with me."

At this the old man paused in his narrative and produced a lady's picture, in miniature, set in a quaintly ornamental gold case. He gazed at it for a moment, and as he did so his eyes became moist, then he handed it to Keene, and the young man saw that it was an exact reproduction of the portrait upon the wall which he had supposed to be the likeness of Cynthia.

"Her father was an American and her mother partly French and partly Spanish. Fortunately for her, she lived but a short time

after the birth of her child. While she was with me I was enabled to forget, in a measure, the curse with which I was branded; but afterwards, when I was alone again, the remem-

brance of it came back, doubly intensified.

"I now foresaw all the sorrow, shame and misfortune to which my little Cynthia was destined, and regretted bitterly that she had been brought into the world to be visited with the sins of her miserable father. It seemed to me that by separating from her and having her brought up a stranger to me, with a wide sea between us, her life might be happier and more innocent, and to this end I wrote to Stephen and made arrangements with this faithful and unchanging brother and friend to receive her under his roof and to bring her up with his own child. This he was the more glad to do, as his own wife had meanwhile died.

"After parting with Cynthia, I again devoted myself to my affairs, and in a short time had got together a fortune, which, though not a very great one, was more than sufficient for my needs, and ample enough to provide handsomely for my daughter after I should be taken away. I now had no further incentive to work. I disposed of my interest to my partners, and for several years spent my time in seeking to find oblivion of that which continually haunted me, in viewing the wonderful relics of the past ages and the marvelous creations of artistic genius, and increasing my acquaintance with the masterpieces of literature. But all was in vain; there has never been an hour of the day when I have not seen the picture of that sad event arise, with startling distinctness, before me; never an hour when I have been free from the bitter regret and sorrow which it occasioned.

"I had long since realized the folly and cowardice of which I had been guilty in fleeing from the consequences of my crime; and a thousand times I regretted having done so. An irresistible impulse seized me to return to Glendale. I longed to see my child once more, and it seemed to me that even in the immediate vicinity of the fatal spot I could not suffer as much as I then suffered.

"This longing for home and for my child at length became so strong that I could make headway against it no longer. I returned and took up my abode in this place. That was about seven years ago. A quarry had been operated here many years before. It had not been worked for a quarter of a century, and few persons if any, outside of Stephen and myself knew of its existence. I had brought with me from across the water two devoted people, man and wife, who were rather friends than servants. We took refuge in a small dilapidated house or cabin which stood on the site of the present dwelling. With the aid of Roberts, I destroyed the path or road by which this wonderful glen had previously been entered, and constructed the hidden and difficult stairway which you have

yourself used. The building of the house as you see it, and the smuggling into the woods of the necessary material, was a much more difficult undertaking, but we accomplished it in

the year which followed our arrival.

"Of course all this was not done without the knowledge of my brother. It was a surprise to him when he heard of my return, and he did not seem to approve of it. He was, without doubt, wiser than I in the matter, and had only my own interests in his mind. Time has shown that he was right, and that I should have remained away, but the impulse to return was so strong that prudence was cast to the winds.

"I have seen him not more than three or four times in all the seven years that I have lived here. I do not think that he has become cold to me, but rather that the multitude of his affairs has been so pressing that he could think of noth-

ing besides.

"I had been here four years before I spoke to my daughter, and it was not until a year after our first meeting that she knew I was her father. I had intended to hold myself at a distance, and to have the small happiness of watching her from afar, without making myself known to her. My feelings were, however, stronger than my will, and I was not able to carry out my resolutions. I met her and talked with her, and finally, through my own weakness and partly through her filial intuition, she discovered the secret.

"Since then she has been to me more than I could ever hope. Her face and all her ways remind me hourly of her beautiful mother, and I would be supremely happy were it not for the dark shadow of crime which haunts me night and day, and the thought ever with me that by my act I have destroyed the future of this innocent and amiable being whom I love.

"My resolution has long been taken. There is but one course for me to pursue, the course which I should have taken on the very night after the crime was perpetrated. I have a few preparations to make in regard to my household and the disposition of my fortune, which will occupy me for two or three days at the most. After they are completed I shall deliver myself to the constituted authorities, ready to stand my trial for the slaying of that unfortunate man and to suffer whatever penalty may be imposed upon me."

#### CHAPTER XV

# CYNTHIA WOULD NOT, BUT SHE DID

When the old man had finished his narrative he became silent, seemingly occupied with painful and conflicting thoughts. His determination to deliver himself up, and suffer the penalty for his transgression, struck dismay to the heart of Arthur, who saw in it the prospect of fresh and more poignant sorrow for the lovely Cynthia.

He felt that it was devolved upon him to say something in answer to Christopher Marwood's disclosures, but he was uncertain what to say and what position to take about the matter. What he did finally say was said in a fainthearted manner, a manner which showed that

he was not half convinced himself.

"I am deeply moved, Mr. Marwood, by what you have told me. No one could help being so. Your position causes me sincere sorrow, and it does seem to me that, if there is any such thing as an expiation in this life for sins committed, your offence must have been wiped out long ago. We must consider first the effect which it will have on the life and the future of your innocent and beautiful daughter. I cannot advise you; in the first place, because I am younger and more inexperienced than you, and

in the second place, because I would have no right to do so. But it seems to me that I would try everything else before coming to the deter mination which you have announced. Why not take her and go far away from here, to the uttermost parts of the earth, where you are not known, and where you may both be secure from the malice of idle tongues and the insolence of men like this Featherstone?"

"What are these things compared to the suffering imposed upon a man by his own guilty conscience? and where could I go to escape that?" asked Christopher Marwood. The question now is not what is expedient, but what is just and right. I can battle no longer with the remembrance which haunts me; and so I have come to this irrevocable resolution. A day or two only is left me, for the invasion of our retreat to-day by this Englishman shows that I am discovered, and that I can remain here unmolested but a short time."

"Then, if nothing can change your determination," said the young man, hesitatingly, but in a sincere and earnest tone, "I have one thing more to offer, or rather to ask of you. From the first day when I saw your amiable daughter I have loved her deeply and honestly. With each moment of my acquaintance with her my affection has increased, and my only wish is to make her happy. Before you take this last step give her to me. Let me make her my wife, and let me spend my life in protecting her from the

cruel mercies of the world and in trying to make her forget the unhappiness which she has suffered."

The old man regarded Arthur with a look full of affection and of admiration. "One reason and the principal one," said he, "why I wished you to hear my narrative will now be plain to you. I knew your feelings toward my daughter, and I did not wish you to express yourself before hearing all. I now see, what I before believed to be the case, that your love for Cynthia is true and steadfast and superior to the test to which I meant to subject it. Your proposal, coming as it does just at this time, when you know all, is most generous and manly, and proves the justness of the opinion which I have had of you. There is no one to whom I would more willingly intrust my Cynthia's happiness, but yet there exist reasons which prevent me from giving my consent at the present time. At some future day it may be different. I cannot explain my reasons; all I can say is that they are sufficient."

Arthur had counted upon gaining Christopher Marwood's consent, and his refusal disappointed him keenly. "If you could find it possible to tell me your reasons," he said, in an earnest voice, "perhaps I could say something which would cause you to reconsider your

decision."

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"I cannot; at least just now, and they are such that you could say nothing which would prevail against them," answered the old man,

sadly but firmly.

The father rested his head, with its silvery locks, upon his hand, and seemed lost in a sorrowful and regretful revery. The door had been left ajar when they entered the room, and a thin ray of light from the lamp was projected out across the floor and wall of the corridor. At this moment it seemed to Keene that a dark shadow crossed this ray of light, and a second later he would have sworn that he heard the sound of footsteps, light and airy as those of a ghost or fairy, cross the corridor and die away in the distance. It might have been only a fancy, and this was the more probable, as Mr. Marwood did not hear it, to judge from his still thoughtful and motionless attitude.

At length the old man roused himself, and taking Arthur's hand in his, gave it a hearty grasp, saying as he did so, with an air of forced

cheerfulness:

"We shall always be friends, though, young man, let these matters turn out as they may, and so let us say no more about them to-night. I am anxious to know the success of your undertaking in regard to your uncle's property. I was informed that that was the object of your visit to this region, and, if it pleases you, I should like to hear whether you have sufficient proof to fasten the matter on the proper persons, and also whether you have succeeded in putting a stop to the depredations."

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"Neither the one or the other," answered Keene, with some constraint. "We are fairly certain about the identity of the man, but what does that amount to without positive proof? And as for putting an end to the depredations, that is a difficult thing when there is a matter of thirty thousand acres to look after. There is an old fellow, a guide named Sawyer, who assured me that, at some time or other, in some way which he did not make plain, he would furnish me with all the proofs required. I was also assured by another man that he was the only one who was able to do so. Whether or not to put any faith in his promises or ability, I know not."

"I am afraid it will be like leaning upon a broken reed," said Christopher, shaking his head. "I have heard of this old man, chiefly through my daughter, who has met him several times in the course of her wanderings, and who has taken a great fancy and liking to him, mingled with an unlimited faith in his ability and integrity. I, for my part, have never seen him. I know that he is an honest and harmless person, for he has known our secret for a long time, and has, I am certain, kept it to himself. I would advise you, however, to make no account of his boasts or promises, for he is liberal with them to recklessness. After making Cynthia certain that he knew our secret and the story of my life, he informed her that she must keep up a good heart and that everything, with his

aid and assistance, would turn out all right in the end. You see that he is as ready in his wild and baseless predictions with this fond and deluded girl as he is with you, and that you must not depend upon him. Well, it is late, and we must retire. I did not ask you to stay with us to-night, for you know, of course, that we expected it. Your former chamber is ready for

you, and I will say good-night."

The old man gave Arthur another warm grasp, after showing him to his room, and left him for the night. One of the windows of the chamber was open. He turned the slats of the shutter and peered out for a long time into the darkness, listening to the rustling of the wind in the trees and the murmur of the water down below the cliff. All at once he heard a sound which seemed to come from a window in the other part of the house. It was faint and subdued. He heard it two or three times. It seemed like the sob or choking of a woman who was weeping; and then he heard it no more, though he waited a long time.

He arose at an early hour next morning. The sun was just up, but there appeared to be no one stirring in the cottage. He looked at his watch, found that it lacked a few minutes of six o'clock, and decided to take a walk up the

glen before breakfast.

He stole out of the house, making as little noise as possible in order not to disturb the sleeping occupants, and in a minute or so found himself past the first bend in the gorge and out

of sight of the house.

Innumerable birds were twittering and chirping in the tree-tops; the cool, fragrant breeze rustled the leaves and made them gleam like silver in the sunshine. With these sounds was mingled the plashing and gurgling of the brook in its bed below the cliffs, and altogether nature seemed fresh and gay and joyous, a condition quite at variance with the state of Arthur's mind, which was depressed and full of anxious forebodings.

For hours, during the night, his thoughts had been with the strange tale told by Christopher Marwood, and with imagining what would be the future of the old man and of his daughter. He had revolved the matter many times in his mind, and striven to evolve some plan by which the threatened disaster might be averted. He was even now engaged with the same thoughts, but all to no purpose. He could think of nothing which would not conflict with the father's stern

and clear ideas of honor and of duty.

After proceeding some distance up the gulch and arriving at a point a short way below the scene of his encounter with the two men the day before, he sat down upon a large boulder near the edge of the cliff, and, looking downward at the stream, with its succession of foaming eddies and black pools and miniature cascades, followed out in his mind the train of thought which had occupied him so long.

Ten or fifteen minutes passed by, and so oblivious was he of external matters that he did not notice the sound of light footsteps approaching from behind, and the first consciousness he had of another presence there was when, suddenly, two small cool hands were pressed tightly upon his eyes.

He had no need of vision to know who it might be. His heart had told him at the first

touch of those little fingers.

"Who is it?" asked a mischievous, musical voice.

"I will describe her," he answered, his whole being filled with the sweet and strange sensation which came from the touch of the girl he loved so dearly, and his heart beating with pleasure at the thought of her indulging in this innocent and

affectionate familiarity.

"She is of medium height, her hair is dark brown, almost black, her eyes the same; her complexion rose-tinted ivory, and there's a dimple in one cheek. She wears a small gray cap, with a gray feather, perched coquettishly a little on one side of her small head, and a tight-fitting frock with a short skirt. Am I right?"

"No, you foolish fellow, you are not right; you are too flattering," she answered, uncovering his eyes and coming around where he could

see her.

While he was blindfolded and while he was describing her person in this manner, he had at the same time pictured her to himself, and the

only way in which he could imagine her was in her character and dress of the little Diana. What was his surprise now to find that he had imagined her to himself and had described her exactly as she now stood before him.

"I heard you leaving the house a short while since," she continued. "I could not sleep well last night, and wanted a little exercise, and thought perhaps you would not object to my company for a few minutes."

"I do object to your company for a few

minutes."

The girl understood him, but pretended not to, and turned away with a pout, as if to return to the house.

"Very well, sir. I shall go back and leave

you."

"I would not object to your company for an hour, or a day, or a lifetime, but I draw the line at a few minutes. Come here, Cynthia and sit down."

She came with affected docility and took a

seat beside him.

"I could not sleep last night," said she, "I had so much to think of. You know all now. Father said he should tell you. Do you wonder now that I cannot sleep? I wanted to talk to you this morning about it, because you have always seemed the right sort. I wanted to talk to you many times before, when my heart was heavy with it. Can we not go away from here? thousands of miles away, before any one else finds out about it? Oh, what shall we do?"

She did look pale and tired. All her affected gaiety had vanished as she concluded the last sentence. No longer was she the care-free and wayward creature who had flouted him with her tantalizing nonsense. He concluded that her father had not told her of his determination to deliver himself up to the authorities. He could not find it in his heart, himself, to tell her. Instead, he cast about to find some way of bringing back a smile to her lips and some small degree of cheerfulness to her heart.

"Now would be just the time," said he, "for settling the question which we were talking

about yesterday."

"What question was that?"

"The question as to your marrying me."

She laughed in spite of herself.

"You silly boy. Will you never stop talking about that?"

"Yes, when the question is definitely settled."

"What is the exact meaning of your 'definitely'?"

"By 'definitely' I mean when the question is

settled as I want it."

"I told you twice that I should never marry."

"I am glad of that, for two negatives make an affirmative."

"Then I tell you the same thing again now,

and three negatives make a negative."

"No, I must correct you. There is no rule for three in the grammar. Besides, things are different now from what they were yesterday."

"How are they different?"

"Yesterday I didn't know your secret. You couldn't tell me your secret, and so you foolishly thought that you couldn't marry me. Now that I know all, as they say in the play, there is no reason why you can't marry me."

"The very fact that you know all is another reason why I shouldn't marry you. In addition

to this, father refused you his consent."

"Did he tell you so?"

"No, but ---"

"Cynthia, you were listening. I thought I

saw your shadow in the hallway."

The girl turned her head away and hid her face from him. He never knew whether she blushed or smiled.

"Cynthia. I am going to make a confession.

Yesterday, I tried to kiss you."

"I know you did."

"Well, I am awfully sorry."

"You do well to show a proper repentance."
"I am awfully sorry,—that I didn't kiss you."

She was very near him, her face was not more than a few inches from his. There was such a compelling magic in the light of her eyes, such a mutinous curve in her red lips, that he suddenly put his arm across her shoulders, brought her face to his and kissed her full upon the mouth. She at once arose to her feet and made a great show of indignation.

"Do you know what you have done? I never

would have believed it possible. How could

you do it?"

"That isn't the question. The question is, how could I keep from doing it. If you could realize how outrageously pretty you looked at the moment, you would know what I mean."

"What a silly excuse! You had certainly no

right to take such a frightful liberty."

"When a man is engaged to a girl he usually

kisses her."

"That is the very reason why you shouldn't have done it. I am going back to the house."

"No, Cynthia dearest, come and sit down

and I will promise never to kiss you again."

The girl stood irresolute. Perhaps such a promise seemed to her a bit too radical. At length she sat down again, though at some distance away.

"I promise never to kiss you again, unless

you first kiss me."

"And I suppose you think such a contingency is possible. There's assurance for you. Never fear, you will not be called upon to repeat the performance. I wish you would stop all this ridiculous folly. I came out here to speak seriously with you. The condition of things is serious enough, I am sure. I wished to talk with you about old Nate, the guide. He always told me to send for him when we were in trouble, and that he would get us out of it, no matter what it was."

Keene's face clouded as he saw the faith of

the girl in this old, unlettered, impecunious guide. It pained him to think how certainly

she would be disappointed.

"You do not know him as I do," she continued, as she noted the look of doubt upon his face. "That man's knowledge is simply wonderful. Sometimes I can hardly believe that he is a mortal like the rest of us. He seems uncanny. He predicts the future with certainty and he

performs miracles."

"I think that I know what he means by getting you out of trouble," said Arthur. "He has some theory about their not being able to convict your father, on account of there being no direct proof of Crane's death. I studied law for a time, myself, though I was never admitted to practice, and I know that this is true in a measure. The common law holds that both the death of the person and the killing may not be proven by purely circumstantial evidence."

"This may be what he means, and again he may have something else in view. Anyway, I want him here. If he can do nothing to avert the calamity which I know is coming, he can take my father away with him through the forest, upon trails which no one can follow. I can then meet them upon the Vermont side of the woods, and from there we can go to some place of safety, if we have to seek the uttermost

parts of the earth."

Keene thought again of Christopher Marwood's determination to give himself up and was saddened by the thought of the cruel dis-

appointment in store for her.

"Let us procure his aid, then, by all means, Cynthia; but where shall we find him? I never was able to do it in my life, though he is always turning up at the moment when I least expect him. I would set out at once if I knew where

the old fellow could be come at."

"He has a log hut, a small cabin, hidden away among the branches, on the shore of the lake at the head of Otter Creek," said the girl. "It is immediately to the left of the outlet as you go up. He showed it to me once, but I could never have found it without having been told where it was. He is in the habit, so he says, of making a visit to this place several times a week, usually in the night time, and there it was that I was to send for him, should I be in urgent need of his services."

"I will set out this very day," exclaimed the young man, "and if Nate Sawyer is there, I will bring him, if I have to bind him and carry him. By the by, Cynthia dear, I have one or two questions which I want to ask you. course, you can answer them or not, as you please, but my curiosity has been raised to the

highest pitch and craves satisfaction."

"I think that I can guess what you want to know," said Cynthia, with a smile.

"In the first place who and what is Leonardo?"

"Leonardo is my uncle."

"What, so young a man?"

"Yes, when my mother, his sister, married, he was but a child. His name is Leonardo Hare. Isn't it a funny name? He detests the name of Leonardo and signs himself Leonard. Val and I call him Lenny. He has been in this neighborhood now for three years. He bought a tract of several thousand acres next to father's land, and considers himself a landed proprietor and a forester. He has adored Valeska since he first saw her, and she, dear girl, thinks the world of him, but cannot make up her mind to marry him; though he is an awfully good sort. Valeska, as you know, is slow but sure."

"I thought at first that Leonardo was a poet

and a painter."

"I can imagine what made you think so. You supposed father's compositions were his. He doesn't know a water color from an oil painting, nor a Spencerian stanza from the wild unconventionality of Walt Whitman."

"But I saw him the night of the day I came back from New York, pinning a serenade to one

of the pillars of the summer house."

"That is a common thing. I think that he must appropriate them from father's manuscripts. Valeska has saved all these effusions and has put them in her scrap book."

"Then it was Mr. Hare's house where I

touched the ghost?"

"Yes."

"And you were the ghost?"

"Yes."

"Why were you wigwagging with a candle, at midnight of the day I first saw you?"

"I was signaling Uncle Lenny. He taught

me the code."

"What were you saying to him?"

"A man has discovered our cottage. Come

over at once and help me get rid of him."

"I have still another question which I wished to ask you. Why did you and Valeska masquerade under each other's names when I

first met you?"

"That is easily answered. You had seen me here in the glen, and I feared that you might imagine that my father was concealed here. If you thought that I was Stephen's Marwood's daughter, you would not be likely to suppose any such thing. We thought that you would remain but a day or two, and that the deception would never be discovered. Perhaps it was foolish but I did it out of anxiety and love for my father. Dear Val fell in with my plan at me. You do not know what a lovely girl she is. What would have happened had you seen her first?"

"It would have made no difference. When a man loves a girl as I love you, it shows that he was prepared by instinct, taste and education to fall in love with just such a girl and with none other."

At this moment footsteps were heard coming down the glen towards them. Arthur started

suddenly, as if fancying that it was another visit from the unwelcome callers of the day before. Just then a man came into sight, and Cynthia, catching a glimpse of him, said compose-

edly:

"It is only Roberts. Father sent him up yesterday, after we arrived at the house, to see what had become of those men. He did not return last night, and I suppose he must have gone some distance, following them. Sometimes he goes to the village. They do not know him down there, and he is always careful to see that he is not watched or followed."

Roberts by this time had arrived within a

few paces of them.

"Is there any news, Roberts?" asked she. "You may tell everything before Mr. Keene

here, who is our friend."

"Yes, Miss Cynthia, there is grave news. When I came up here last night those two villains had gotten themselves out of the way. I went a piece through the woods, and after half an hour or so came upon them. I had to keep at a considerable distance, so could not hear them, excepting that they swore very often. One of them, the big one, limped a good deal, so it was an easy matter to keep up with them, which I did as far down as the mill. I then went down and hung around the village during the night. I was in the tavern and saw them drinking. I used my ears there and elsewhere to good advantage, and I have news to tell you which is

I would like, though, to speak to bad enough. you alone."

"There is nothing which you cannot say just as well before Mr. Keene. He knows all."

After casting a rather uneasy look at Arthur,

the man continued, hesitatingly:

"It is all about that nasty piece of business of twenty-five years ago. It seems they have discovered an old indictment against your father. They have gone after two or three deputy sheriffs or constables, and as near as I could learn they mean to set out some time this afternoon, with Featherstone, to find and arrest Mr. Marwood."

Roberts hung his head, after giving this disagreeable bit of intelligence, as if he himself were implicated in the proceedings he described. As for Cynthia, she turned deathly pale and leaned against the rock for support.

"Oh, my father!" she said. "What is to be

done? Can we not get him to go away?"

"Not he!" exclaimed Roberts. "He means to do the most foolish thing of all. He has made up his mind to ---"

Arthur made a gesture for Robert's benefit to prevent him from informing the girl of her father's fatal resolution, and broke in with:

"Something can be done and will be done. Roberts, you go down to the house, and I will follow with Miss Cynthia when she has recovered somewhat from the shock which your news has given her. You had best not tell her father of this matter until we talk it over."

The faithful servant of Christopher Marwood nodded and went on his way towards the cottage. Arthur turned his attention to Cynthia, who, with her hands clasped in her lap, looked straight before her, with an expression of despair

upon her charming face.

"Do not lose courage, Cvnthia. It cannot be as bad as Roberts thinks. Something fortunate will happen. At all events, even if they start as early as he says, they will not be here before five or six o'clock in the evening, and by that time I shall be here with Nate. I propose to set out at once. It is now seven o'clock. By eleven o'clock I shall arrive at the lake, and at three o'clock in the afternoon we shall be here again."

"Sometimes I think it would be just as well if I should remain here, and take my stand with Roberts at the head of the glen. He seems a husky fellow, and we might hold the pass against all comers, like that fellow upon the

bridge that Macaulay tells about."

"That is nonsense. I have no doubt that you could do it, but it would make matters all the worse in the end. You may laugh at me as much as you like, but I have a superstition about the old guide and I wish he were here."

"Never fear, Cynthia, if I can find him, I will have him in the glen this afternoon, if I

have to carry him."

They had now set out on their return to the

house. Keene did not share her confidence in old Nate, but she was evidently sincere in her belief, and this sincerity impressed itself to a certain degree on the young man, who could not help admitting to himself that there was something very astonishing, not to say supernatural, about the character and talents of that curious personage.

It was arranged that he should stop at the house just long enough to breakfast hastily, and then forthwith set off on his long and tiresome expedition in quest of the old guide. They had gained a point now a few rods only from the cottage, which was still hidden behind the cliffs

and the pine-trees.

Cynthia stopped and faced him.

"Your necktie is coming loose," said she, "let me tie it for you." She took the two ends of it in her taper fingers, but found that she was not tall enough. He bent over somewhat to accommodate her. Suddenly she lifted her face to his and kissed him on the lips. Then turning she ran, with the fleetness of a doe, in the direction of the cottage, and in a moment was lost to sight in the copse which surrounded it.

#### CHAPTER XVI

### NATE IS EQUAL TO THE OCCASION

A few minutes later, Keene, having breakfasted quickly, left the house without again meeting either of his hosts, and, ascending the glen, made his way up into the forest and set out on his long tramp in search of the muchneeded Nate.

He found, as he expected, that it was a much easier matter to find the way going from the mysterious glen than it was when one was in search of it. After half an hour's march, he had got sufficiently to the eastward to clear the upper end of the great gorge of Otter Creek. It was an easy task for him then to strike the creek and continue his journey by following its

course upward.

His anxiety on account of Cynthia and her father increased with every moment. Already, in his mind's eye, he saw the cottage invaded by three or four emissaries of the law, and the venerable, white-haired Christopher Marwood subjected to insult and rough usage before the eyes of his daughter. These thoughts caused him to accelerate his pace and to dash along the rough, half-obliterated trail, through underbrush and morass, and up steep acclivities, with-

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out the slightest regard for his person or his

powers of endurance.

At the same time the temporary faith in the ability of the old guide, which had been awakened in his breast by the confidences and enthusiasm of Cynthia, oozed slowly away like the courage of Bob Acres, and he asked himself many times if he were not bound upon a fruitless and idiotic errand, and if it would not be better to return and help Cynthia and her father face the danger which menaced them. And as often would the charming face of his beloved rise before him and urge him onward to complete his invener

plete his journey.

It was but half past ten when the lake came in sight. He had accomplished the distance in three hours and a quarter instead of four hours. The log cabin or hut of the guide, according to Cynthia, stood somewhere under cover of the trees, upon that side of the outlet upon which he found himself. He carefully skirted the shores of the lake, beginning at the outlet. After scanning the forest for a quarter of a mile without success, he returned upon his footsteps, and at length, under cover of a thick copse of tamaracks and cedars, a point which he had scrutinized before to no purpose, he discovered it.

It was small and rudely constructed. The interstices of the logs were, however, carefully stopped with clay. The roof boasted a smokepipe, and its one door and window were storm-

proof, so that it would afford protection in all kinds of weather, even in the depths of winter. Keene looked through the window. There was a canoe lying upon the floor, and the hut contained a small wood-stove, a bed, a chair, a table, and one or two other necessary articles. The old guide, however, was not visible; neither was there any evidence to show that he had been there recently. The cabin, with all that it contained, presented a deserted, lonely appearance. The grass was growing before the sill, and a cobweb had been woven right across the door-frame.

Keene was now more than ever convinced that he had come upon the wildest of all wildgoose chases. He had tramped a dozen miles through the woods to find a harum-scarum, irresponsible individual, without there being any likelihood at all of his being at the point where he expected to meet him; and with what expectation? With the expectation that this ignorant, boastful old man, without means or influence, was able in some way to stop the wheels of justice and save Christopher Marwood from the fate which he himself admitted to be inevitable and just.

It was now a quarter past eleven. The sheriff's party would probably set out from Glendale about half past one, and would arrive at the glen at about four o'clock. If he got back before their arrival, he would have to start certainly by a quarter or half past twelve. He

therefore had an hour at his disposal, and he concluded to wait that length of time for Nate.

The old guide, if he came at all, would come by water. Keene, therefore, stretched himself upon a mossy knoll which lay between the hut and the shore of the lake, and which commanded a view of the entire surface of that body of water, and for some time kept a careful lookout for the appearance of the canoe of the man whom he

was seeking.

It was a beautiful piece of blue water, surrounded by a dark picturesque fringe of forest and encircled by lofty hills, some with bare, craggy tops, and others clothed with a soft, undulating carpet of woods. He saw a reddish object moving in the bushes at the right, and raised himself to look at it. It was a deer coming to the water to drink. Now and then a king-fisher gave forth its discordant cry, and a solitary eagle wheeled about in the blue ether a half a mile above the lake.

He had had little sleep the night before, and was very much fatigued with his recent exertion. Besides this, there was something in the prospect to make him drowsy, and in the sound of water rippling against the shore below him. After a while he could resist these influences no longer and fell asleep.

He awoke with a start and looked at his watch. It was two o'clock. He had slept about two hours, and it was now utterly impossible to get back to the glen before the arrival of the

party from Glendale. Never before had he felt so ashamed of himself. He was wretched at the idea of his weakness in thus forgetting and neglecting the interests of her he loved so much, and his first impulse was to return with all speed possible, with the forlorn hope of arriving in time to be of some aid to his unfortunate

He once more, with his hand shading his

friends.

eyes, scanned the extent of water, and was about to give it over and plunge into the forest, when there appeared a small speck upon the surface of the lake a mile or more away. It was in the direction of the head of the lake, and a careful inspection showed it to be a boat propelled by a solitary oarsman and coming in his direction.

The next ten minutes were anxious ones for Keene. At the end of that time he was able to distinguish in the boat a man clad in a blue woolen shirt and a dilapidated slouch felt hat, and in ten minutes more, the boat having arrived within a distance of a quarter of a mile of the place where he stood, he become convinced that the occupant of the boat was no other than Nate Sawyer the guide.

When he came within hailing distance, Arthur called out to him, telling him to hurry, but the old man seemed to have become deaf, for he paid not the slightest attention to his reiterated shouts. Finally the bow of the boat

grated against the ground at Keene's feet.

"I have been waiting for you three hours or

more," said the young man, speaking quickly and irritably. "Miss Cynthia and her father are in trouble, and she has sent me after you. We cannot arrive in time as it is; let us begone at once."

"I expected to see ye here, near about this

This was the only answer vouchsafed to Keene's appeal by the Ancient Mariner, who forthwith began hauling his boat leisurely out of the reach of the water. After this was accomplished, he very slowly took from it his paddle and several small articles, and having unlocked the door of his hut, proceeded to put them away inside. Keene, meanwhile, was growing very impatient.

"This is almost a matter of life and death," said he, angrily. "I told you that we could scarcely arrive in time. Will you go or not?"

"What is the matter?" asked Nate, lighting his pipe with exasperating coolness.

"This Featherstone, of whom you told me, came up there yesterday and insulted Miss Marwood. I had followed him from Glendale, and was just in time to rescue the girl and to chastise him soundly."

"Did ye, though?" interrupted Nate, looking

at Keene admiringly.

"It seems he found out about Christopher Marwood. The Englishman went back to Glendale; they looked up an old indictment against him for the murder of one Beriah Crane. twenty-five years ago, got out a warrant, and were to start to arrest Mr. Marwood in the afternoon. Probably at about this time. The old man's daughter is wild with apprehension, and, as a last resort, entreated me to find you and bring you there before the sheriff and his posse should arrive."

"Did she, though?" ejaculated Nate, with a

chuckle of satisfaction.

"Yes, it seems that, from something you have told her, she has the greatest faith and confidence in you, and thinks that you can save her father."

"Right she is, young man."

"Well, what are you waiting for? As I told you before, we can scarcely arrive in time as it is."

"Let's see," said Nate, reckoning upon his fingers. "They start at two, or, figurin' on two or three loads of hard stuff at the tavern, which they won't go without, we'll say half past two. 'Twill take 'em an hour and a half, or mebbe an hour and three-quarters, to get there, makes four, or a quarter past four. What hour'd ye say 'twas now?"

"Half past two. You see it can't be done.

It will be all over by the time we arrive."

"No, it won't," contradicted Nate, puffing with an air of contemplation and enjoyment upon his pipe. "We'll interfere somewhat with their little plan. By the by, d'I ever tell ye the story about the four-cornered shootin' match?"

"No, you didn't, and I can't listen to you now."

"Waal, I want to tell ye that story, so jest

listen."

"I'll be damned if I do. We must not stay here a moment longer. If you start telling one of your long-winded yarns, I'll leave you and go back alone."

"All right, young man, but ye've missed a better story than ye ever heard in yer life. I allow now, that we might as well be a-goin'."

"Well, why in heaven's name don't you start, then?" almost yelled Arthur, who was wrought up to a passion by the seeming indifference of the guide.

"Give us time, Mr. Keene, give us time; and then, there's no sech hurry as all that. Jest

lend a hand with this canoe, will ye?"

Saying this, he went into the hut and took hold of one end of the canoe which Arthur had previously observed lying upon the floor. He motioned the young man to raise the other. He obeyed, grinding his teeth meanwhile at this new delay.

"Now then, easy, or ye'll stave a hole in her

bottom."

"What do you want to do with it, anyway?" demanded Arthur, repressing a sudden impulse to dash his end upon the ground and smash it in.

"Float it, of course. Easy now! There she is!" exclaimed Nate, as the boat floated upon the water, tight as an egg-shell. "And now take off

your shoes and get in, if ye can, without upsettin' her."

An inkling of the guide's purpose passed through Keene's mind. He meant to make the descent of Otter Creek in the canoe, as he had often done before, and as he himself had seen him doing a short while since. The passage of ten or a dozen miles occupied but an hour, so Nate had told him. He wondered that he had not thought of it, and hope revived in his breast at the prospect of yet arriving in time to prevent the catastrophe.

With much care he crawled into the boat and placed himself in the bow. Nate shut and fastened the door of his hut, and, taking his paddle, sat down in the stern of the canoe. A few well-directed strokes sent them flying out

into the lake.

"Now," said the guide, "I might as well tell ye that story about the four-cornered shootin' match. It'll take us ten minutes to get to the outlet, and we jest as well put in the time that way as another."

Keene muttered something which sounded very much like profanity; Nate, however, con-

tinued:

"It wuz a year ago last October that I hired out to a party of four fellers what kem up from Utiky to hunt deer. We'll say that one of em's name wuz Peters, another Jones, another Cassidy and another McGinty. These wa'nt their real names eggsactly. Fact is, they give me a

twenty dollar bill not to give em away. They hed a big dawg with em, a sort of a cross between a bull dawg and one of them big Dane hounds. I ast em what they brung him along fer and they said as how he wuz a good bird dawg. I told em they'd better leave him at hum, he might be a good bird dawg, but he didn't look it, and ef they wuz deer within twenty mile, he'd scare em off afore we could get a shot at em. Howsomever they persisted in bringin' him along. Arter we'd been hittin' the trail fer about ten minutes, I began to be mighty sorry I'd hired out to em. Fust thing I knowed, one of em, I think it wuz McGinty, stubbed his toe, and his gun went off and blowed the crown offen Jones' hat. Then again, I wuz trampin' on ahead and Cassidy wuz follerin' me, about six feet behind. Every time I'd look back at him, his rifle wuz pinted at the small of my back. Arter I'd spoke to him twice about it, I made him go ahead; and I sez to m'self, Wot kind of a pasel of lunatics hev I got in with enyway? When we got to a likely place fer deer, a sort of a runway, between two hills, I sez to 'em, Here's as good a place as eny. All we got to do's to set down behind these here rocks and scrubs and wait. 'Naw,' sez they. 'We'll scatter out through the woods, one one way and another another, that bein the more likely way of gettin' a sight of somethin'.' Now the leaves wuz still on the trees, though turnin' yaller and red, which made it mighty hard to

see anythin' fer certain, ef it wuz a hundred yards off. Besides this, all them fellers wuz rigged out somethin' gorgeous in that brown canvas stuff, what they call 'caky,' jest fer all the world like the color of a deer's hide, and I pinted out to em the fact that they run the risk of shootin' each other up. 'Naw, we won't,' sez they. 'We kin tell a man from a deer any day in the week.' Waal, I see it wuz no use arguin', so I let em go, and they started off, one one way and another another, with the dawg tearin' around, now here and now there, so's I couldn't nohow keep track of him. When they wuz all gone, I sez to m'self, sez I, 'This place is sure no place fer me,' and I looked round fer some kind of a bullet-proof shelter. Not seein' anythin' which looked anyway safe, at last, I clim up a big pine tree, and set down, comftable and peaceful-like, in a big crotch about thirty feet from the ground. 'Somthin's bound to happen soon,' sez I. 'But I don't jest see how they's goin' to git me here.' About fifteen minutes arter that, while I wuz smokin' my pipe, quiet and contented-like, I heerd a shot some hundreds of yards off to the east. 'Ten to one, he aint seen no deer,' sez I. Just at that moment, kem another shot, off to the north. 'Praps it wuz a deer, arter all,' thinks I. Then kem another shot to the west, and, right arter it, a shot to the south. Then I heerd a yell, fit to raise the dead, from whar the third shot kem, and I sez to m'self, 'One of em's got his, sure

enough.' At that I clim down outen the tree quicker'n scat, and made tracks toward the chap what had let out such an awful yowl. Pretty soon I met up with Cassidy, who wus runin' towards the same place. He wus trailin' his rifle on the ground by the barrel, and seemed some excited. 'It wuz I got the deer,' sez he, 'but what's McGinty yellin' about?' 'The deer you got,' sez I, 'wus a two-legged deer, and as fer hollerin', it's a good thing he's got life enough in him fer to holler.' Just then we kem through some scrub hemlocks, and found Mc-Ginty a runnin' round in a circle, a holdin' his hands on that part of his 'natomy which he sets on when he sets down. I looked him over and found it wuz nothin' very serious and told him so. 'Did I get the deer?' sez he. 'Did ye shoot a deer?' sez I. 'Sure,' sez he, 'he wuz off there in the bushes, two or three hundred yards to the North.' Cassidy and I set out fer the spot he pinted out, and pretty soon we kem upon Peters a layin' on the ground, senseless, and his face kivered with blood. I looked him over and found where a bullet hed cut a groove in the scalp on the top of his head, so's you could lay your finger in it. Howsomever he wuz jest stunned and that wuz all, and, arter we had washed out the wound and bound him up, he kem out of it. And he had no more'n kem to, when he sez, sez he: 'I killed a deer off there to the East, about three hundred yards. I saw him drop. Go and look him up, or Jones'll say he

got him.' So we went off to where he pinted, and found Jones a layin' on his back, his face as white as dough, his eyes a rollin' and his hands on his stummick. 'Boys,' sez he, 'I'm a dyin!' With that I looked him over and found he wa'nt shot at all. The bullet hed struck the cartridges which was stuck in pockets acrost the front of his jacket, and hed knocked the wind outen him; but he hed a black and blue spot on his stummick as big as a plate. Soon as he found he wa'nt goin' to die, he sez, sez he: 'Jest before that derned fool of a Peters shot me, I shot a fine buck. You'll find him lyin' in the brush up there about two hundred yards to the east. Waal, we went to where he pinted, and, what d'yew think? So help me, he'd shot that big dawg as dead as a mackerel. So, yew see, Cassidy shot McGinty, McGinty shot Peters, Peters shot Jones, and Jones shot the dawg, and wa'nt I the wise guy, all right, to have been sittin' up in that tree?"

In a minute or two after the conclusion of Nate's tale, they arrived at the outlet. As they did so, the boat began to feel the impetus of the current and was swept quickly along the black stream, which passed through the centre of an acre of lily-pads, and in a moment they had entered the forest and were gliding along at a tremendous pace beneath its interlaced and tangled branches.

The guide had ceased paddling, and used his paddle like a rudder to steer the boat with.

Keene was struck once or twice by low-hanging branches.

"Better lie down in the bottom of the boat,"

muttered Nate.

Arthur obeyed the injunction, stretching himself on his stomach and looking over the bow of the boat. The stream was not over fifteen feet wide, but very deep and running at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour.

Every now and then the creek would make a turn. They would come around with a sudden lurch, and were it not for the vigorous strokes of the old man's paddle, they would certainly have capsized. At one point they passed two deer which were standing knee-deep in the water—a buck and doe. They were so close to the canoe that Keene might almost have touched them as he swept by. They gazed at the two men and the boat with their large eyes wide open in astonishment and never offered to run.

After proceeding for four or five miles in this manner, the creek became wider, the current slower, and the forest more open above their heads. Here Nate again began to use his paddle, and it seemed to his companion, such was the old man's skill and strength, that their progress was fully as swift as before.

After three-fourths of their voyage had been completed the banks began to assume a rocky character; the current became more rapid and more broken by hidden boulders. A hun-

dred times they would have upset had it not been for the old guide's vigilance and quickness.

"Look out! We are near the fall," called out, suddenly, that individual. "Lie closer

down and keep to the middle!"

Keene obeyed his instructions. There was a pleasing uncertainty about his situation which made him smile in spite of himself. He hadn't the slightest idea how high the fall was. It might be a foot or two, or it might be twenty feet. In this latter case his position was not to be envied.

Nate began to paddle vigorously and the canoe shot ahead like a meteor. Suddenly the young man felt a sort of qualm, such as one feels when falling or sinking quickly in an elevator. The fall was all of four feet. The canoe had shot into the air beyond the fall, on account of the tremendous impetus given to it by the paddle of the old man, and had fallen, keel on, upon the water. There was a tremendous thump on the bottom of the canoe and several buckets of water came over the bow.

Arthur attempted to bale it out, but instead of diminishing, the depth of water in the bottom of the boat seemed to increase. Looking for the cause of this, he found a ragged hole in the bottom fully an inch and a half in diameter. He took his handkerchief and, winding it around his finger, thrust it into the hole and baled with the other hand.

"It's all on account of the extry load," ob-

served the old man. "Must have rubbed somewhere before we kem over the fall. It's lucky there's only a couple of miles more of it, and it's derned unlucky that this couple of miles are the

worst of the hull voyage."

In a few moments more, Keene was fully convinced of the truth of this last assertion of the guide. The stream twisted and turned; the descent was growing greater; the current more impetuous, and here and there great black rocks rose from the bed of the creek directly in the channel.

Their speed momentarily increased. Sometimes they would cut through masses of white foam piled up like snow; at others, some great rock would appear suddenly before them, and it seemed as if they must be dashed to pieces, when a dexterous stroke of the paddle would send the skiff clear of the danger.

"It will not float much longer," all at once cried out Arthur, who was stopping the break and at the same time baling with might and

main.

"Hold on for five minutes more and then

she can go," called back Nate.

A few minutes more passed. They had almost arrived at the commencement of the gorge. The boat was half full of water. The old man veered the canoe suddenly to the left-hand bank of the stream. It passed over a yellowish ledge, which lay two or three feet below the surface, and was dashed with great violence against the

rocky bank, the force of the blow smashing the bow to splinters and sinking the slight craft immediately. The two men scrambled up on the rocks, somewhat bruised, but more wet than hurt, while the remains of the boat drifted swiftly down-stream.

"She was a good one," said Nate, regretfully gazing after it. "Cost me forty dollars. Not that I care for that, though, but we seemed like old friends. Never ought to have carried two down Otter Creek. Waal, come on! we've a

good mile before us."

Keene looked at his watch. It was half-past three, and if the distance to the glen was only a mile, they would, without doubt, arrive in time. It seemed to him, however, that it must be two or three miles at least, and he expressed this belief to the guide. "Only a mile, and a short one at that," answered Nate, authoritatively, leading the way and plunging without more ado into the woods above the bank. "Takes seventeen hundred steps to get there. Counted 'em off more'n once."

"I would like to know, Nate, what plan you have to prevent these people from arresting Christopher Marwood. We can't use force, there will be too many of them; and, even if we beat them off, they will come again in greater numbers. Neither can we induce Mr. Marwood to make his escape, as he has resolved to deliver himself up. What then can we do?"

"Why, stop the hull thing right thar."

"How stop it?"

"Why, the way to stop it is to stop it."

There was no use in interrogating a man who answered in this obstinate and foolish manner, so Keene changed his tactics.

"Do you know Christopher Marwood per-

sonally, Nate?"

"Know him! that I do, and he knows me. I know him to be as fine a man as ever walked. Quick and fiery at times, mebbe, but just and generous and forgivin', truer'n steel, and wouldn't harm a fly, which is more'n he knows about me, I reckon."

"But how about the murder, Nate?"

"Justifiable homicide," was the only reply the old man made.

Christopher Marwood had told Keene that he had never seen Nate, and here was this double-dyed Ananias claiming a mutual acquaintance. Arthur's heart sank within him as he realized anew the guide's ridiculous conceit and his boastfulness, and as he thought how this was the sole dependence, the last resort of the beautiful and sorrow-stricken Cynthia.

"We've known each other many a year, hev I and Christopher Marwood, and that's the reason I'd move heaven and earth to get him out of

a triflin' unpleasantness like this."

The sound of a small fall of water now came to Arthur's ears, and almost immediately they came to a gully in which ran a deep, clear stream. The guide sprang across it, and the young man

following him, they commenced to descend the stream on the farther side. The noise of the falling water increased, and presently they came out of the forest above the end of a deep, rockwalled gorge, and the young man saw that they were standing at the head of the mysterious glen.

He looked at his watch. It lacked but a few

minutes of four.

"We are in time," said he, with a look of relief. "The party has evidently not arrived."

"They are down there," answered Nate, pointing with his thumb down into the ravine. Keene looked towards the spot indicated, and counted five men proceeding slowly and cautiously down the gorge in the direction of the cottage.

"Too late, after all," muttered he, bitterly. "If you had started off quicker at the beginning,

we would have got there before them."

"Better get there behind 'em," observed Nate, as he commenced, without more ado, to descend the perilous steps which led down into the gorge.

A few minutes later they were following the

five men down the gorge towards the house.

"We can keep alongside of the cliff, under cover of the shrubs, and so get ahead of them," eagerly exclaimed Keene. "Come! let us hasten!" He started on a run. Nate grasped his arm

with a hand of iron, pulling him back.

"You will get us into trouble with them, and spoil all," said he.

A feeling of rage entered Arthur's heart, and he felt like striking the old man; nevertheless, he restrained himself and walked on beside him

in moody silence.

When the sheriff's party was within a few hundred feet of the house, one man happened to look back and saw the two following. He spoke to his companions and they all stopped, and conversed together, and looked at Keene and the old man. In a moment, seemingly as though they had come to the conclusion that it did not matter, they resumed their march.

When they arrived at the house, Keene and the old man were a hundred feet behind them. Roberts came out on the porch as they came up.

"What is your business here?" he inquired,

gravely.

"We came to see Mr. Christopher Marwood," said one of the men, who seemed to be their leader. "Is he in the house?"

"He is, but he is not feeling well and you

cannot see him today."

"We must see him. Stand aside, my man,

and let us go in."

They prepared to force their way past Roberts into the house. At that moment, Cynthia rushed out upon the porch and stood directly in their way. She was dressed in black, and the pallor of her skin and the dark rings beneath her eyes showed that she had been suffering. Arthur and Nate had by this time joined the five men. Arthur was standing to one side so that she did

not see him. The old man had purposely

stepped behind a tree.

"My father is a poor old man. He is weak and cannot stand a shock. Can you not wait until some other day? Until he is stronger?" she asked the men.

They shook their heads. Featherstone, who was one of them, forced his way to the front and

took her by the wrist.

"We came here to arrest him, and we are not

going away until we do it. Do you see?"

Cynthia gave a cry of pain, of horror. At that moment Arthur caught the Englishman by the collar and, spinning him around like a top, hurled him fifteen feet away. His companions grappled with the young man, and just then the venerable, white-haired Christopher Marwood appeared in the doorway.

"What is the cause of this disturbance, my

friends?" said he, calmly and gravely.

The men let go of Arthur, and the same one who had previously spoken, a deputy sheriff, by name John Grant, spoke for the rest.

"Are you Christopher Marwood, sir?"

"I am," answered the old man, gently yet firmly.

"I have a warrant for your arrest."

He produced a document from his pocket. Cynthia stepped to her father's side and threw her arm around his neck. Grant read the warrant. When he had finished, there was silence, except for the sobbing of the girl.

"What is the charge against Christopher Marwood?" suddenly spoke up Nate, who had stepped into view.

Cynthia gave a cry of joy. Grant turned around and looked curiously at the singular

apparition.

"I don't know that it's any of your business, my old fellow, but at the same time I haven't any objections to telling you that Mr. Marwood is charged with having, some twenty-five years ago, murdered a resident of this vicinity named Beriah Crane."

"It's a lie," said Nate, coolly, looking Grant

in the face.

"Better keep a civil tongue in your head, or you'll get into trouble yourself," said the latter. "It's a lie," reiterated the old guide, stepping

into the midst of the group.

"Why so, my old chap?" asked Grant, ironically.

"Because," answered the guide, straightening

himself up, "I am Beriah Crane!"

A silence like death fell upon the group. Christopher Marwood, who from the first moment of Nate's appearance had kept his gaze riveted upon him, as if under some sort of powerful fascination, came down the steps trembling, his eyes wide open and looking straight before him, like a somnambulist. He put his hands upon the old guide's shoulders and gazed for a moment upon his face.

"It is he! it is he! Oh, the mercy of God!

It is he!"

Then suddenly he reeled backwards and would have fallen, if Nate had not caught him and seated him gently and reverently upon the steps of the porch. The guide stood there, by his side, with his arm thrown affectionately around his neck, in a measure supporting him. With the other arm he gesticulated forcibly and nervously as he told, swiftly and without pausing, the fol-

lowing story.

"It wuz more'n twenty-five year ago. This man, Christopher Marwood, his brother Steve and me wuz at law together. They beat me somethin' scandalous, and used up every cent I hed. Waal, we met one night on the banks of Otter Creek, a matter of a mile above the town, to talk the thing over. Our argifyin' ended up in a row; I called Kit Marwood a tough name, somethin' that wa'nt true. He went off his base to onct and hit me a awful wallop over the pate. I wuz knocked plumb senseless and fell down as ef I'd been shot. When I kem to, a leetle later, he wuz clean outen his head and wuz doin' all he could to bring me outen it. I held my breath and did everythin' to make him think as I wuz dead. Arter awhile they quit. Kit Marwood seemed eenamost crazy cause of what he done. Steve told him to light out to onct, and he took his advice and started off, leavin' me to Steve, who promised to look arter me, and dew all he could to bring me back to life. Arter Kit wuz well out of sight and hearin' this hypocritical old cuss, Steve Marwood, dragged me to the bank of the Creek, and tumbled me into the bilin' water. I let 'em do it, cause I wuz a mighty good swimmer, and cause it put him in my power. When I sank, I swum along the bottom of the creek and kem up fifty feet below the pint where he hed thrown me. It wuz dark and he didn't see me arter I sank. I stayed in the stream till I got down to the mill; then I landed and went hum. I wuz livin' alone then. I took what leetle money I hed in the house, and, bein' keerful to leave no trail, left Glendale that night without envone knowin' of it. I hed lost every dollar in my suits with the Marwoods; I owed Tom, Dick and Harry, and couldn't hev stayed thar no longer nohow. I concludes therefore to take advantage of my bein' a corpse and vanish from the community. Fust I thought I'd even up with the Marwoods. I follered Kit Marwood everywhere. I hed a lot of chances to pay him back fer that tarnation hard crack what he give me, but the more I knew of him, the more I thought he wuz a pretty good sort of a chap arter all, and the less I felt like gettin' even with him. I hed some relations livin' around in different places, who hed depended on me, now and then, to help 'em out, when I wuz better fixed fer doin' it. Two of 'em went to Steve Marwood fer a small loan, which he refused. A few months arterwards, this man Kit Marwood sent over and hed 'em all hunted out by his agents, and fer more'n twenty year pervided 'em, without their knowin' who he wuz, with a comftable livin'. When I diskivered this, my hard feelin's all oozed outen me, and 'stead of thinkin' how I c'ud down him, I jest turned round the other way and became plumb anxious to give him a lift somehow. Waal, I kem back to the Adirondacks, makin' my headquarters on the eastern side of the woods, and I turned to and follered the perfession of a guide. This way of life wuz pleasin' and give me a chance to get even with Steve Marwood, which same I hed no use fer, nohow. Even this feelin' wore away in time, and I kin truly say that I hev no ill-will to no one. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord. 'I will repay.' And so let it be with Steve Marwood, fer I never shall go fer to harm him. As fer this man, Kit Marwood, thar's no man like him. He's a Christian gent, he is, and ef thar's any of 'em more truer and better and more like his Maker, I'd jest like to meet up with sech."

Every one was mute with astonishment and filled with interest in the old man's tale. When he had finished, Cynthia went to him and almost hugged him in her delight, laughing and crying at the same moment. Christopher had hold of his hand in both his own. Tears of gratitude and happiness moistened his furrowed cheeks, and he looked now at Cynthia and now at Nate, as if still in doubt as to the reality of this wonder-

ful change in his fortunes.

A year has passed since the day which witnessed the occurrences just described. Arthur

Keene and his wife, who looks very much like the little huntress, are making a stay of several weeks at the cottage in the glen. They have a winter home in one of the large Atlantic coast cities, and have been travelling abroad for the last half-year. They are, at present, wandering together up the gorge towards the cascade. He has his arm around her waist, and it looks very much as if he were making love to her, just as he did a year ago. Old Mr. Marwood is sitting at the open window of the library engaged in an interesting conversation with another old man who sits at the other window. This latter is an honored and ever-welcome guest in the household, and is no other personage than Beriah Crane. His friends never call him anything, however, but Nate. He is as much of a character as ever. He shows the same dry, kindly humor, and though keen, shrewd, and unerring, for the most part, the eccentric and defective side of his nature sometimes gets the better of him, and he exhibits the old propensity towards drawing the long bow, and maintaining, in the face of positive proof to the contrary, that right is left and that left is right. His mind has evidently never fully recovered from the injury caused by his early disasters, and there is certainly a screw loose somewhere in his mental mechanism.

Finally, the little wooden sign above the porch has been turned right side out, and upon it, in legible characters, one can read the name of the house, "Heart's Rest."

